

一生一世 美人骨

墨宝非宝
著



浮生若梦，为欢几何

暖心作家墨宝非宝惊艳之作

携手最动人的前世今生

如果有个人，带着前世的记忆深爱着你——

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一生一世 美人骨

周冬雨
主演



浮生若梦，为欢几何

周冬雨主演 周冬雨、余文乐、陈伟霆、王祖蓝、王祖蓝、王祖蓝

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One Life, One Incarnation - Beautiful Bones

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Introduction & Prologue

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Novel Introduction and Prologue

[February 20, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [82 Comments](#)



It's a new year and new beginnings, so how about, a new novel translation? With *Really, Really Miss You* winding down to its final few chapters, it's time to announce my next project — *One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones*, by Mo Bao Fei Bao (author of *Really Really Miss You*). When Toupai and Sheng Sheng's story is complete, this one will take over that posting slot.

I'll give you a (mainly) spoiler-free introduction and review of the novel first. Further down, you'll get a translation of the short prologue as a little teaser.

One of the reasons why I am a huge fan of MBFB is because of her writing versatility. I deliberately chose this story because it is a completely different sort of novel from RRMY. I would use cute, sweet, and fun to describe RRMY whereas I would use beautiful, touching, and poignant to describe Beautiful Bones. On top of a beautiful love story, there is mystery and suspense.

You can read my translation of the official novel synopsis on [SSB](#) and further down in the comments, I have written a more detailed summary. (Be forewarned

that if you read down through my summary and the comments, there are spoilers riddled everywhere.)

“Beautiful bones. Rare in this world. Those with bone do not have skin. Those with skin do not have bone. Most people’s eyes are shallow, seeing only the skin-deep appearance and not the ‘bones,’ the appearance of the inside.”

The “bones” and “skin” are metaphorical and taken from an ancient text in which these actually are referring to inner and outer beauty, respectively. Most people are shallow and only see outward beauty and fail to acknowledge inner beauty.

The female lead, Shi Yi has memories of her past life in which her heart belonged to Zhousheng Chen. That life ended in tragedy for them, and in this life, her only goal and desire is to find him again... and one day, she does. He does not look the same, but she knows that beneath the outer appearance, it is him. He, however, does not remember her.

Here’s an excerpt of what I wrote on SSB:

In this life, Shi Yi, an ordinary person with an ordinary life, has found him again. Not wanting to lose him again, she hastily barges into his life, not hiding her interest/attraction to him. Zhousheng Chen never shows any signs of reciprocating her interest until one day, an unexpected phone call from him says, for personal reasons, he needs to get engaged and asks if she will be his fiancée. When she agrees to it and they start building a deeper relationship, Shi Yi realizes there is much more to Zhousheng Chen than what she knew.

Shi Yi is very different from Gu Sheng. She knows exactly what she wants — to find and not lose Zhousheng Chen again — and is not shy about it. She is not innocent about the ugly realities of life. After all, how can she be when she remembers pain of the past life? But that sets her firm on what she values.

Zhousheng Chen is the show stealer. He is a “nerdy” professor and has a very forgettable outer appearance (that’s right, you do not have a handsome male lead), but this guy oozes presences. He will captivate you! I have read a huge number of c-novels and to me, he still has the most presence out of all the male leads I’ve read about. He is gentlemanly and warm, yet commanding, down to his minute gestures, and when he chooses to love a woman, his attention to

every small detail can make the girl feel like the most blessed person in the world. His family background is not what you would expect, though, and is deeply rooted in the dirty and dangerous underground society.

Hoju's solemn promise: This novel is more serious than RRMV but is not heavy. There are moments of heartbreak, but no angst in the relationship. There are no third parties to spoil a beautiful, touching love story. Have patience because it is a very (very, very, very) slowly developed romance, but the details will warm your heart. And it is a happy ending!

Actually, I sometimes think I'm insane for choosing this as my next translation project. I started out my translation hobby by working on the works of more "classic" wuxia authors, and I can honestly say that translating Jin Yong does not intimidate me as much as translating this novel. I said before on SSB: Because of the references to the past life, there is a lot of ancient style writing woven into the story. There is so much poetry, calligraphy, etc in this novel that lots of the novel has an ancient feel, despite being set in current day China. In fact, it feels more ancient than some ancient novels I've read. (Haha, I guess I've gone the polar opposite from RRMV's very modern, slang and online culture.)

Coupled with that is MBFB's beautiful writing for this novel. I cannot describe it, except that when I read the novel, there is an atmosphere that I sense. It's like I am watching scenes that are continuously shrouded in fog. Sometimes, that fog is like a gentle mist, creating a beautiful, romantic ambiance for a developing love between our leads. Other times, the fog is like a haze, obscuring the vision slightly but creating a dream-like atmosphere, like when we are flashed back occasionally to their past lives. And at times, that fog is like thick dark smoke, muddling your senses and creating an eerie atmosphere, like when we are given a glimpse of Zhousheng Chen's family and what they do.

I am neither an English major nor a Chinese major. In fact, I went the sciences route!! Hence, my request to the readers is, I will be using your comments and feedback to judge how well I'm doing. Let me know what you're feeling about characters, plot, atmosphere. While I know everyone has different interpretations of a story, I am trying my best to maintain author intent and "feel" in the novel.

Lastly, I just wanted to say, SSB was discovered by MBFB's book fan club on

Weibo, and the name “Beautiful Bones” was criticized for being too literal. Let me go on the record now and explain this. The name of the novel is 一生一世美人骨. The last three characters, 美人骨 are what I have translated as Beautiful Bones. Literally, it means, “the bones of a beauty” while technically, what it is really representing is “the inner character (i.e. ‘bones’) of one who possesses true beauty”. As you can see, then, “Beautiful Bones” was my nice compromise, so long as you all understand it is metaphorical.

And with that last note, onto the novel translation.....



Prologue – Half a Lifetime Spent Drifting in a Dream

Shi Yi leaned against the window, looking out beyond the car window at the street signs that were speeding by. She could not help giving a heartfelt sigh over the good weather. There was not even a trace of a cloud in the azure sky, so even one’s mood was pleasant because of this. The taxi cab’s whole journey had been flowing and unimpeded, and even after she was out of the car, her check-in procedure was smooth. However, inside security, both times she passed through the metal detector, the alarm had sounded loudly.

The most frustrating part was, the alarm over in the other security line next to her was blaring incessantly as well. She wondered who was having the same wretched luck as her and had encountered an unreasonable metal detector. “Miss, would you mind taking off your shoes. We need to check again.” She

nodded and sat down on one of the chairs off to the side. As she was lowering her head to remove her shoes, she saw the backside view of the man in the adjacent security checkpoint.

Very tall, his back very straight. When she noticed him, he was picking up his laptop computer.

On the other end of the security checkpoint, the long queue wound back like dragon.

And on this end, it was only the two of them being inspected.

“Mr. Zhousheng Chen?” The man guarding the security checkpoint was holding the passport he had left behind. “You forgot your passport.”

“Thank you.” He turned around.

Sensing her gaze on him, he lifted his eyes to look over at her.

That instant of eye contact seemed to suppress all the chaos and noise surrounding them. Nothing else concerned her anymore. Shi Yi stared deeply at him, unable to move her gaze away. She wanted to laugh and at the same time, wanted to cry, but either way, she could not speak, not even half a word.

He had come after all.

Zhousheng Chen, you have come after all.

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 1.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 1.1

[March 14, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [27 Comments](#)



Our friend, Little Winter has started up her own [blog](#) and is writing her own original fiction. Pop over and give her some encouragement.

And here is the official kick-off of the translation for *Beautiful Bones*!

I am translating from the published version of the book. From what I've seen, the differences between the published hardcopy book and the online version is largely just word smithing. A noticeable difference is, this first post here was actually the prologue that Mo Bao Fei Bao wrote when she first posted the story online. In the published book, it got incorporated into chapter 1. (So if it feels introductory, well, it was meant to be. :P)

Chapter 1.1 – The Unfathomable Past (1)

The rain came down in a continuous drizzle, causing Xi'an to seem like misty Jiangnan^[1].

This was Shaanxi province, the vast land of the Three Qins[2], yet the ancient Chang'an city[3] was not even visible.

Shi Yi was leaning against the window and watching the street signs that were speeding by.

“What would you like to eat?” Hong Xiaoyu, who was sitting beside her, smiled and opened up the map that had been previously folded up into a small leaflet. On her mobile phone, she was flipping through various food guides while at the same time, planning out their route for after they checked-in to their hotel.

“Let's finish up the interview you're doing first, alright?” Shi Yi reminded her laughingly. The young videographer beside her had been playing with his camera, and when he heard this, he too let out a laugh.

The three of them stepped out of the car, walked through a quiet street, and passed by several houses that were scattered in the area until at last they found the place they were looking for.

The person who opened the door was a young girl, who appeared not much older than twenty. Hong Xiaoyu's interviewee was this girl's husband, a very simple and honest-looking man.

When they were all inside the house, the couple shyly invited Shi Yi and the others to have a seat.

“Don't be nervous. Just treat this like a casual conversation,” Hong Xiaoyu told them with a warm smile and motioned for the man to sit in front of her.

It was a dreary, rainy day, and the room was very dim.

There was only a single lamp, placed between the interviewer and interviewee, that gave off a yellow light.

As the interview progressed with an answer given for each question asked, Shi Yi gradually got to understand the story.

The man before them came from a very poor place, and after working hard and diligently for several years, he managed to make a little bit of money. However, he did not keep a penny of it for himself and instead invested it all in the education of the people of his hometown, helping families that were even poorer

than him.

He had no riches or estate of his own, no house under his name.

Yet, he was a man of noble character.

However, the reason why this story attracted the attention of the media was because of his young wife. This pretty girl there before them was actually a university graduate and also came from the man's hometown. It was because she saw his story in the news that she sought him out and then married him.

The first half of the story was very touching, but the second half was truly unexpected.

Such gloomy, damp weather and there was no form of heating installed in the room.

Shi Yi and Hong Xiaoyu had been sitting the whole time, and their hands and feet had long since become ice-cold.

Fortunately, the interview was coming to an end, and Hong Xiayu finally turned toward the girl. "Based on normal standards, your husband really cannot be considered a good spouse whom one would want to entrust the rest of her life to. What are the next steps and plans the two of you have?"

The girl smiled and turned her eyes to the man. "We both have the ability to earn money and our bodies are healthy. After we return home in a couple of years, we will definitely live a very good life. And what's more," the girl laughed lightly, "I am not worried that he will do anything that will hurt me. He is a good man."

The young wife's words concluded the interview for today.

Business was finished.

They went to a nearby Mi Family Paomo[\[4\]](#). It was a very small eatery, crowded shoulder to shoulder with people, and its setting was very noisy, but business was exceptionally good. While she ate, Shi Yi allowed her gaze to wander her surroundings, and she discovered there were people who were

actually holding a bowl and standing off to the side, breaking their “mo” flatbread into little pieces as they waited patiently for a seat to open up.



A Mi Family Paomo restaurant in Xi'an. [Photo credit](#)

Hong Xiaoyu was also following suit, breaking her bread into small chunks. “After seeing today’s interview, do you have any particular words you want to say to express your feelings?”

Shi Yi burst out with a laugh. “Do you want to start a blog and you’re just missing some introductory words to write?”

“Hey, you stupid woman.” Hong Xiaoyu shot a glare at her. “Hurry up and just tell me.”

Shi Yi took a sip of her soup, then thought for a moment before answering. “Most people’s eyes are shallow, seeing only the skin-deep appearance and not the ‘bones,’ the appearance of the inside. This young girl is rare indeed for she could see the intrinsic nature of this man.”

With an “oh,” Hong Xiaoyu said, “That sentence sounds really meaningful. I like it.” She added some spicy flavoring to her soup and then suddenly thought of something. “You said yesterday, that researcher or something that you met in the Guangzhou airport is going to be in Xi’an these next few days as well?”

There was still food in Shi Yi’s mouth and she answered in a somewhat unclear voice, “His university has recently been doing a knowledge exchange on a project with the Chinese Academy of Science, so he is here on a business trip.”

“Truthfully, I can’t see what’s so special about this person. His looks are just average, too. I never would have thought that you would actually take the initiative to meet him.” Hong Xiaoyu grinned at her. “This is what they

supposedly mean when they say he is ‘to your liking’?”

She cast a weary glance at Hong Xiaoyu. “I just want to get to know him. I don’t have any ill intentions.....”

Before she could finish what she was saying, she felt a slight weight on her shoulder. A man’s hand was resting on it.

Hong Xiaoyu allowed her gaze to move upward from the beautiful hand, and then, she could not help laughing inwardly: What a coincidence, it was the person the two of them had just been talking about.

There was a strong scholarly sense emitted from this man’s face. His appearance and facial features were very ordinary. One could not say he was ugly, yet he was not handsome either. He was someone whose appearance did not leave an impression and was easy to forget. He was wearing a white coat that could be commonly seen in any laboratory but the buttons were not done up such that the coat was wide open, exposing the button-up shirt and trousers that were underneath.

Very neat and clean in appearance. There was nothing whatsoever that was inappropriate or wrong, just that he did not fit in at all with their current surroundings.

Shi Yi still had a mouthful of soup she had not swallowed as she stared dazedly at him.

She very biasedly thought that his looks were very good; they were not very intimidating. Besides that scholarly air that seemed to give off a very slight sense of aloofness, this face could not be any better or make one feel any more comfortable.

He removed his hand in a deliberate manner and then sat down, placing his wrists on the edge of the table as he said, “Such a coincidence.”

Before he had finished speaking, he was already gently waving down the owner of the restaurant.

“Most people’s eyes are shallow, seeing only the skin-deep appearance and

not the bones, the appearance of the inside.’” Only after the owner had answered him did he once again look at Shi Yi. “This sentence is true indeed.”

[1] 江南. Jiangnan is the region south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and encompasses parts of the provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Anhui. This region is known for its mild but rainy weather. It is also recognized for its beauty, from its natural landscape of lakes and green hills, often shrouded in an enchanting mist, to the gardens, water towns, arching bridges, and pavilions.

[2] 三秦大地 “san qin da di.” Upon the fall of the Qin Dynasty, eighteen feudal states were created. Three of these feudal states were granted to three former generals of the Qin Dynasty, and hence, these together became known as the “Three Qins.” The Three Qins occupied basically what is now the present day province of Shaanxi and hence nowadays, is synonymous with it. This area is historically rich, and there are many relics left over. Relics remaining from the ancient city of Chang’an (which was located in and around present-day Xi’an) can be seen within Xi’an and surrounding area.

[3] 长安. Ancient capital city of more than ten dynasties in Chinese history. It is now the present day city of Xi’an.

[4] 米家泡馍. “Mi Jia Paomo.” Paomo is a food from Shaanxi cuisine and would be considered “everyday food”, especially popular in the city of Xi’an. The “mo” is a type of flat bread that the customer tears up himself and then the pieces are “pao” or soaked in usually a mutton soup. It is said that the Mi Family is one of the families that made the best and most authentic form of this dish. However, which is the original “Mi Family” restaurant, no one knows anymore. All around the city of Xi’an, there are several Mi Family Paomo restaurants, each claiming to be the original, that are extremely busy. The paomo restaurants in Xi’an are akin to diners or little eateries with local flair in the Western world.



“Mo” – flat bread that is ripped up into the soup. [Photo credit](#)



“Paomo” – little pieces of ripped up “mo” soaked in soup (this particular one is beef). [Photo credit](#)

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

1 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 1.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 1.2

[March 18, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [23 Comments](#)



A chance encounter with him. Will anything come out of it?

Chapter 1.2 – The Unfathomable Past (2)

Hong Xiaoyu also sighed, “Truly, such a coincidence,” and cast a rather meaningful glance at Shi Yi.

In terms of appearance, Shi Yi was most certainly amongst the finest. Her facial features and outline seemed as if they had been painstakingly drawn with a pen. Her beauty was not the least bit intimidating, but it was different from the man’s ordinariness. In particular, when she looked at you, her eyes were very bright. After you had truly been out in society and had viewed countless beauties, you would realize that a true beauty’s eyes will always be bright and not clouded

over.

The most important point was, Shi Yi was very conservative. She would never wear anything that would reveal her shoulders.

A very traditional, yet beautiful girl was simply a rare treasure.

Hong Xiaoyu turned her gaze back to this man.

Ah, just let it be. As long as her good friend liked him, a man's face was not that important.

"Such a coincidence indeed." As the man spoke, he picked up a pair of disposable chopsticks, pulled them apart, and began rubbing one chopstick against the other to remove any wood splinters that might be protruding. "You are here in Xi'an on vacation?"

"Xiaoyu is here to do an interview," she replied. "We are planning on taking advantage of this business trip to have fun here for a few days as well."

Their videographer who had been eating away with his head lowered the whole time smacked his lips, put down his chopsticks, and very amiably handed him his business card.

The man took the card, then felt around with one hand in his pant pocket, but after searching for a while, he still was not able to find anything to give in return. "My apologies. I am not used to carrying such things on me all the time." He gave a brief introduction of himself. "Zhousheng Chen. Associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley, College of Chemistry. Currently, I am at the Xi'an branch of the Institute of Organic Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences in the polymer research laboratory doing a knowledge exchange project."

The string of what seemed to be specialized and complex nouns caused the videographer to have a whole new level of respect for this man.

"Shengchen [birthday][\[1\]](#)? Nice name," he commented with a chuckle. "Call me Xiao Shuai [Little Handsome]. I'm Hong Xiaoyu's co-worker."

Zhousheng Chen smiled politely, "It is actually the two-character surname of Zhousheng and single character name of Chen."

Xiao Shuai replied, "Oh, oh. Mr. Zhousheng."

Shi Yi could not help laughing. This surname was truly uncommon, and it was not surprising that someone would find it peculiar.

Xiao Shuai seemed to feel that it was extremely improper of him to have gotten someone's surname wrong, so in a very serious tone, he tried to find himself a way out of this awkward situation. He commented to Zhousheng Chen, "In my opinion, that sentence Shi Yi just said is really quite good."

Hong Xiaoyu did not wait for Zhousheng Chen to answer and instead, jumped in to mock him. "Do you know what it means?"

Xiao Shuai had no way to back out now^[2], so he could only continue to argue, "Of course I know, but it is definitely a concept that you can only grasp mentally and is hard to explain."

"Don't try to grasp it mentally. I'll tell you where this sentence came from." Xiaoyu asked him amusedly, "Have you heard of *Lasting Words to Awaken the World*^[3]?"

Xiao Shuai gave her a blank look.

"You know what the *Three 'Yan' and Two 'Pai'*^[4] are?"

Xiao Shuai thought it sounded familiar.

"High school history books should mention them. Books from late Ming dynasty containing short stories." Xiaoyu pulled out a set of chopsticks that still had not been broken apart yet and used it to knock against his bowl. She grinned, "The meaning of this particular sentence is, people nowadays only see someone's outward attributes — you know, their bills of money, cars, and looks — and cannot see inner qualities."

Xiao Shuai gave a long "oooooh" and even the ending sound of that vowel seemed to change in pitch. "Much admiration for you."

"The one you should have admiration for is Shi Yi." Hong Xiaoyu purposely gave Zhousheng Chen a glance. "All of this stuff, she forced me to read ever since we were young."

Zhousheng Chen astonishingly understood the intention behind her words and smiled.

Xiaoyu thought his smile was one of praise and recognition. Shi Yi, though, recognized that his smile was because he had seen through Hong Xiaoyu's little ploy. Hong Xiaoyu knew that Shi Yi was interested in him, so needless to say, she was trying to find indirect ways to praise her and allow Zhousheng Chen to take notice of her.

However, Hong Xiaoyu did not know that Zhousheng Chen truly already had a deep impression of Shi Yi.

They had met half a year ago at the Guangzhou airport. At the time, the two of them were at the entrances of separate security checkpoints in the process of being scanned by the metal detector, and they each set off the detector's alert. While she was removing her shoes so they could be inspected for metal objects, she saw him.

Just this single glance, and she knew it was him.

The face was different, the voice was different – all of those outward attributes were completely different from that person in her memory, but she just knew that it was definitely him.

Security had finished checking him. He picked up his laptop computer and walked quickly towards the exit of the security checkpoint. All Shi Yi could remember was, at that moment, her mind was completely blank as she chased after him in her bare feet.

She did not dare miss her chance with this person and so she very naturally forgot what type of circumstance and surroundings she was in.

Therefore, the first look he had of Shi Yi was actually very comical.

Behind her were airport workers chasing after her, seeming worried she might be a gangster, but her eyes were only focused anxiously on him. "Wait for me. I need to have a word with you." She really had not been in the mindset to think about looking to see what Zhousheng Chen's expression had been at the time.

That was the first time she had ever felt that there was some use to her appearance. For example, the way the airport employees behaved toward her could be considered to still be courteous, treating her as if she had just run into

a friend of many years and had gotten slightly carried away. As she put on her shoes, she would cast glances at him out of the corner of her eye, fearing that he would leave.

Fortunately, Zhousheng Chen really did not leave and waited for her the whole time.

That first meeting was very intrusive and abrupt.

Later, she had no explanation for her actions and could only say to Zhousheng Chen that he had a strong resemblance to a friend of hers. Regardless of whether he believed this or not, as long as he was not too averse to it, then it was fine. However, when she even more intrusively asked for his mobile phone number, he actually used the reason that he did not have a mobile phone to reject her request.

At that time, she had felt very awkward, but fortunately, he had offered up his email address.

From their first meeting until now, it had been more than half a year, and the two had not seen each other again. All their interaction had been through email. Moreover, there had been nothing special said within those emails. Zhousheng Chen was in polymer organic chemistry while she was a voice actor, two careers that would absolutely never cross paths anywhere.

As a result of this, Shi Yi developed a habit of logging into her email account everyday.

There were several times when Hong Xiaoyu had spotted her doing it, and there had been no end to her mocking. Hence, this time, when she had known she was coming to Xi'an on business and had heard that Zhousheng Chen was also here on an extended business trip, without any additional explanation needed, she had pulled Shi Yi along with her. Last night, as Shi Yi exited the airport, she was still hesitating over whether she should arrange to meet up with him, and if she did, what excuse she could use. She never expected that they would chance upon one another here.

Zhousheng Chen had very good eating habits. From the moment he picked up

his chopsticks, he had not spoken again.

Hong Xiaoyu tried several times to catch Shi Yi's eye, but she managed to avoid her gaze.

"Teacher Zhousheng." A young man, who had come jogging in from the restaurant entrance, closed his umbrella and headed over in their direction. "Next month when I am paid my wages, I should just buy a mobile phone for you. I'll be responsible for topping up your minutes and charging your phone, and my only request is that you keep it on twenty-four hours a day for me." It appeared as if he had been running hurriedly the whole way as the bottoms of his jeans were drenched. "I ran around to several different places. If I hadn't seen the research institute's vehicle, I don't even know how long I would have had to continue looking."

The whole time, as he walked into the restaurant, his eyes had been fixed on Zhousheng Chen, who was eating, and had not paid any attention to Shi Yi, whose back was towards him.

When he drew near, he could not help being taken aback. The young man never would have supposed that sitting opposite of Teacher Zhousheng was such a beautiful woman. He stammered for a long time before he finally managed to recover his voice and continued saying, "So, uh..... Teacher Zhousheng, the seminar, I think we'll probably be late. I've been looking for you for half an hour..... I think we're late."

"I understand." Zhousheng Chen slowly and methodically ate another two bites. He put down his chopsticks. "I have matters to attend to and must leave. We will connect again if the opportunity arises." Shi Yi watched him stand up, and then she felt someone give her a hard kick on her leg.

When she turned around to look, Hong Xiaoyu had already cleared her throat and was saying to Zhousheng Chen, "I hear the cherry blossoms have been blooming beautifully lately at Qinglong [Green Dragon] Temple[\[5\]](#). None of us are from Xi'an, and since we are all here anyways, why don't we go together to see?"

Zhousheng Chen's footsteps halted.

He lifted his head to glance at the intensity of the rain. "It has been raining

these last couple of days in Xi'an. When the rain stops, if you still have not left, we can arrange a time."

"Alright, let's do that, then." Hong Xiaoyu put her arm around Shi Yi's shoulder and said, "When the time comes, we'll have Shi Yi send you an email."

He nodded in what could be considered agreement to this.

By the time Shi Yi and Hong Xiaoyu returned to the hotel, the bottoms of their pants were completely soaked.

After Shi Yi took a hot shower, she searched through the room, trying without success to find some instant coffee. In the end, she could only boil some water and, using packaged paper tea bags, steep two full mugs of chrysanthemum tea.

She handed one mug to Hong Xiaoyu, who placed it in passing on the bedside table while looking through her email inbox and pulling some tissue to wipe her runny nose. "From today's simple lunch, I have finally discovered what could barely be classified as another good quality about Zhousheng Chen: he is manly and not indecisive. Hmm, but that's not right either." She lifted her head for a quick glance. Shi Yi had simply pulled her long hair into a messy bun, but even this sloppy appearance of hers was good enough to be in a magazine photo shoot. "Ever since we were young, I only needed to use you as an excuse and then I could get anyone to accept an invitation to go out. If you think of it that way, then he really isn't that special either."

Ignoring her teasing, Shi Yi picked up her computer and logged into her email.

When she saw that there were no new messages inside her inbox, she felt an inexplicable sense of disappointment.

She quickly closed her laptop and said, "No matter how good-looking the face is, at most, it will only be nice to look at from age sixteen to thirty-six."

"I like looking at beautiful things, especially if they are as a pair." Hong Xiaoyu wiped furiously at her nose. "Plus, it's beneficial for the genes of the next generation." Shi Yi's lips came together in a smile. Her eyes were bright. Truly very beautiful...

They were both cold from today's rain, so now, they huddled close together under the white quilt to provide warmth for each other.

"Shi Yi, do you really like him?"

"Not exactly." Even she felt she lacked surety when she spoke. "I just think he seems very special."

"What is special about him?"

She could not think of any excuse so could only answer, "His name is special."

His name truly was the most special thing. In her memory, the him of the past had the same name.

"My name is even more special." Hong Xiaoyu decided to just simply take off her jeans and then pulled the quilt up to cover herself again. "'Xiao yu tian xia [a good reputation that shines throughout the world][\[6\]](#).' But how come you don't treat me like I'm particularly special?"

"That explanation of your name is not a good one." Shi Yi was deliberately avoiding topics related to Zhousheng Chen so she switched to teasing Hong Xiaoyu instead. "Let me think of one that is more romantic for you so that you'll be able to marry yourself off in the future."

Hong Xiaoyu listened delightedly. "Tell me quick, tell me quick."

"Let me think." Shi Yi carefully pondered before finally speaking again. "Although it's a little forced, I'm sure you're going to like it. Have you ever heard this line from Nalan Xingde[\[7\]](#)'s poem?" She leaned close to Hong Xiaoyu and recited, "Willingly I partake of the Yu Hong grass, drunken for ages and no longer to awaken.'"

"No." Hong Xiaoyu shook her head. "What is the literary reference about?"

"Legend has it that there is a Yu Hong [Jade Red] Grass that grows only in the Kunlun mountains. If someone accidentally consumes any while gathering it, that person will be in a drunken state and will not awaken for three hundred years." She deliberately changed her voice to one she used when voice acting and softly spoke her name. "Hong Xiaoyu. Hong Yu. Yu Hong. Do you think your name's meaning is actually 'Yu Hong Grass'?"

Hong Xiaoyu burst out in amused laughter. “Why are you suddenly thinking and saying such weird things? Wait, no, since you were young, you’ve always thought and said weird things. It is a bit of a forced explanation, but it is very artsy. I like it. From now on, I’ll use this explanation.”

Suddenly, several loud thunderclaps boomed outside the window.

Having received her little benefit, Hong Xiaoyu quickly went back to her old ways. With a grin, she poked fun at Shi Yi. “It seems this rain is going to keep coming down for several days. I don’t even know if we will have a chance to get to see the cherry blossoms at Qinglong Temple.”

“If we can’t see them, then we won’t.” Shi Yi wrinkled her nose and exhaled a long breath. “It’s not as if we will never come back.”

Early the next morning, she was awoken by her mobile phone.

She picked it up. It was a call from the recording studio. Her mind was still groggy when she heard the other end chattering away incessantly about her work line-up. “You are so popular. Do you know how many people are specifying that they want you to do the dubbing? Just from these four days of vacation time in Xi’an alone, do you know how much money you’ve given up that you could have earned?”

She rolled over. Hong Xiaoyu was still fast asleep and was not showing any signs of rousing.

Concerned that she would wake up Xiaoyu, she whispered that she would send over her voice recording plans and then hung up the phone. Quietly picking up her laptop, she placed it on her knee and opened it up. Four emails quickly appeared in her inbox. Her eyes swept over the subjects and landed on one email without any subject line. The sender was Zhousheng Chen.

At 04:36, when I stepped out of the lab, there was no rain. If it is still not raining at 11:30, I will see you at 12:00 at Qinglong Temple.

Zhousheng Chen

[1] The videographer misunderstood the name 周生辰 to be surname 周 Zhou with given name 生辰 Shengchen. If you think of it that way, the two characters 生辰 “sheng chen” put together mean “the time of one’s birth” or “birthday”. However, his surname is actually Zhousheng 周生 and his given name is 辰 Chen.

[2] 骑虎难下 “qi hu nan xia.” Idiom: once you ride a tiger, it will be hard to get off. The idiom is trying to say, there are some difficult situations where once you have gotten yourself into them, you will have to stick with them as you cannot back out of them halfway through.

[3] 《醒世恒言》*Xing Shi Heng Yan*. A book written in the late Ming dynasty by Feng Menglong that is a collection of 40 stories.

[4] 三言二拍 “San Yan Er Pai” or “Three ‘Yan’ and Two ‘Pai’.” The three “Yan” refer to the three books written by Feng Menglong: 喻世明言 *Yu Shi Ming Yan*, 警世通言 *Jing Shi Tong Yan*, and 醒世恒言 *Xing Shi Heng Yan* (which is the one Xiaoyu and Shi Yi are referring to). The two “Pai” refer to two books written by Ling Mengchu: 初刻拍案惊奇 *Chu Ke Pai An Jing Qi* and 二刻拍案惊奇 *Er Ke Pai An Qing Qi*, which are known together as [Slapping the Table In Amazement I and II](#). These five books are all from the late Ming dynasty and are collections of stories.

[5] 青龙寺. Qinglong or Green Dragon Temple is a temple that was famous during the Tang dynasty. During this period when Japanese monks were sent to China to study Buddhism, six went to Qinglong Temple. Besides its history, one of its tourist attractions is its cherry blossoms that bloom between approximately March to May.

[6] 晓誉天下. “A good reputation that shines throughout the world.” The first two characters in this saying are the same as the characters in 宏晓誉 Hong Xiaoyu’s given name.

[7] 纳兰性德. Nalan Xingde was a Manchurian nobleman and official in the Qing dynasty, well-known for his excellence in the literary arts. Some of you [Wallace Chung](#) fans may know this historical figure through Wallace’s portrayal of him in the drama, [Secret History of Kangxi](#) (*Kangxi Mishi*).



[Wallace Chung](#) as Nalan Xingde. Pic included here for Peanuts and all the other WC fans.

Additional Comments:

I like how this chapter reveals information about our leads, from Shi Yi's traditional personality and love of ancient literature to Zhousheng Chen's precise nature revealed in that email, which notated the time down to the minute.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

2 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 1.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 1.3

[March 21, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [34 Comments](#)



Cherry blossoms after the rain. Sounds romantic, right? Good enough to win over the professor of chemistry?

Chapter 1.3 – The Unfathomable Past (3)

After Shi Yi saw the email, her gaze shifted to the bottom right corner of her screen. 7:36 a.m.

She was a little worried, would this meet-up be like the previous ones where, because of unexpected weather changes, a sudden sickness, busyness at work, or various other strange events that arose out of the blue, it would be cancelled?

But this time, Heaven suddenly opened its eyes to her and the rain did not continue coming down.

Their videographer was actually from the province of Shaanxi, so even though he was not born in Xi'an, he was still familiar with the city. Shi Yi was worried about being late, so she anxiously asked Hong Xiaoyu and the videographer to confirm how long it would take to get to Qinglong Temple from where they were. The end result was, they were early by a full twenty minutes.

Perhaps because it was cherry blossom season and the weather had just cleared up as well, Qinglong Temple's main entrance was bustling with people coming and going and was rather crowded. They chose a more noticeable location to wait, and approximately ten minutes later, they saw Zhousheng Chen alone in the distance coming toward them.

As Shi Yi faced the sun, she squinted her eyes and recognized him, and her heart seemed to quietly settle down.

"Shi Yi, you're a lost cause....." Hong Xiaoyu whispered to her. "Your face is all red. Don't tell me it's because of the sun."

She shook her head. "I'm not going to try to explain to you. I can't explain it so that you would understand anyway."

"You're early, Teacher Zhousheng." The corner of Hong Xiaoyu's lips curved upward as she greeted him with a smile. "Ten minutes early. Is that a habit of yours?"

Zhousheng Chen stretched out his hand and gave two entrance tickets to Shi Yi. "When I am meeting someone, I am normally fifteen minutes early. Just now, I used five minutes to purchase the tickets." The remaining ticket, he handed to the videographer.

With a thank you, Shi Yi took them from him and then slapped one of the tickets loudly into Xiaoyu's palm.

Hong Xiaoyu had never been here before, so naturally, she did not know this meeting place she had arranged was very pitifully small.

They entered the temple and wandered around for a little while. The cherry blossoms bloomed boldly and unabashedly, and the eaves had a mottled, ancient color. However, the small number of people sitting on newspapers and chatting in groups of twos or threes detracted quite a bit from the blossom-viewing atmosphere and made it seem more like a regular spring outing. Despite it being such a crowded, little temple, there were still several groups of tourists who were walking side by side and listening to their guide's explanation.

“..... 1986, Qinglong Temple introduced cherry trees from Japan and planted them on the temple grounds. There are a total of twelve precious varieties here. The ones that blossom early in the season include the Edohigan [彼岸櫻], Ito-zakura [红枝垂櫻].....” The tour guide recited his prepared commentary.



Cherry blossom season at Qinglong Temple. Photo credit [1](#) and [2](#)

Shi Yi listened in interestedly and even took out her mobile phone to secretly record part of his description, but unfortunately, the guide soon left. She listened to a few seconds of the recording but discovered that it was noisy and unclear, and she hesitated over whether to delete it.

If she wanted to recall the information later, perhaps taking some photographs of the interpretive signs with her camera would be better.

“When I first arrived, the people at the research institute here gave me a book of Xi'an city's notes and descriptions. If you would like, I can give it to you,” Zhousheng Chen told her in a nonchalant tone. “All over this city, there are

stories that can be told.”

Shi Yi nodded, then allowed her gaze to drift away from him, as if she was very interested in the cherry blossoms.

“Do you like reading books?” she asked suddenly.

“Everyday, I have a fixed time that I allow for reading,” he answered. “But my reading is not inclusive of everything. It depends on if the book is interesting or not.”

Shi Yi answered with an “oh” before tentatively continuing to ask, “Have you ever been to one of those very ancient-style library towers? The type that has row after row of wooden shelves filled with countless books and scrolls?”

The ancient library tower she was thinking in her mind was not very clear in her memory but was connected to him.

That place did not often have people in it. Sometimes, when the windows were opened to allow air to circulate, a breeze would blow in, and the books on the shelves would make rustling sounds as a few pages were turned.



An image of what I imagine Shi Yi’s “ancient-style library” might look like. The image on the left is truly an example of an ancient library. It is the ancient-style library at the [Yuelu Academy](#), an institute of higher learning that has had more than 1000 years of uninterrupted history. Photo credit: [1](#) and [2](#)

Zhousheng Chen did not really understand what she was trying to say. With a faint smile, he said, “The place I often spend time in also has row after row of wooden shelves, but on those shelves are all bottles and containers and various dangerous apparatuses that should not be readily touched.”

Shi Yi gave a little laugh. "Seems rather interesting."

"Interesting?" A smile was still on his lips. "The lightest consequence would be burns, and the more serious, explosions."

Shi Yi was truly frightened by this. "A high-risk occupation? Based on what you've said, who would want to go into a lab, then? Wouldn't you be extremely nervous about everything being so dangerous and you'd be fearful all day long? How can you still go about doing your research?"

"It is not that terrible. I got used to it very early on." His words were very straightforward, as if he was speaking about something that could not be more commonplace. "When I first entered this field, there was one night I forgot something inside the laboratory and so I had to go back early the next morning. At the time, there was not a single person there, and then an explosion occurred. Half of the entire laboratory was blown-up and destroyed right in front of me. It was fortunate that I had not arrived a few minutes earlier, so I managed to preserve my life."

Shi Yi was completely dumbstruck when she heard this. "And then?"

"And then?" Zhousheng Chen thought for a brief moment. "Fortunately, the dozen or so materials that I had been working on were still intact, so that same afternoon, they were moved to the adjacent lab and I carried on with the tolerance testing for them."

Zhousheng Chen was very casual when he stated this, as if he was talking about a random person's matters. But she felt post-trauma fear after hearing this and forgot to avoid the branches of the cherry tree that were beside her. Only when Zhousheng Chen's arm reached up in front of her and brushed aside that fragrant branch of blossoms did Shi Yi finally register a response, and she hastily said thank you to him.

The temple was not very big, and after strolling around for a while, they concluded their little spring outing.

Since it was still early, they went to a nearby teahouse to rest. Inside, the teahouse was nearly full. Zhousheng Chen's student, though, was sitting at a

table on the second level near a window, and he looked as if he had been waiting for quite some time. The instant he saw them, he immediately rose to his feet and greeted, “Teacher Zhousheng, over here, over here.”

“Huh? Teacher Zhousheng, you were so thoughtful as to arrange for your student to save a spot for us?” Xiaoyu pulled out a chair and seated herself down first.

“Teacher didn’t arrange it,” the student hurriedly explained. “My dad is the one who owns this place, and I happened to have the day off today. Yesterday night, when Teacher and I were working on a late night experiment, he said that he was coming to Qinglong temple today to view the blossoms, so I deliberately saved a table here for all of you.”

While the young man spoke, he also brought out some tea and, one by one, set it on the table in front of each person. When he reached Shi Yi, the young man actually appeared a little embarrassed and he smiled shyly, “I forgot to mention, my name is He Shan.”

She replied with an “oh” and commented, “That’s an easy name to remember[\[1\]](#).”

He Shan had a very favorable impression of this pretty big sister[\[2\]](#), and purposely offered up the tea straight into her hands.

Hong Xiaoyu had been neighbours with Shi Yi since childhood, so she was very accustomed to these sorts of situations and did not find it the least bit peculiar. Instead, she shot a glance at Zhousheng Chen and then looked over at Shi Yi. This person surnamed Zhousheng was really quite unique. At the very least, he did not allow his composure to slip when in the presence of a beauty.

“Come on, come on. Let’s play a game of ‘shuang sheng[\[3\]](#)’.” Hong Xiaoyu cheerfully pulled out a couple boxes of playing cards and poured them out so that the tabletop was covered. “Shi Yi doesn’t know how to play card games, so it’s just perfect, the four of us will play.”

Seeing her card game addiction was flaring up, Shi Yi obligingly gave up her seat right away and moved in to the furthest reaches of the table. In the end, Zhousheng Chen was on a team with the videographer and they were the Opponents. By coincidence, his seat was beside Shi Yi. She noticed a book on the

window, so she picked it up and planned to read it to pass the time. It was a *New Weekly* magazine, likely left behind by a tourist, and she flipped it open to the inside cover page and casually glanced over it.

Zhousheng Chen drew a card out, his motions unhurried, as he carried out a casual dialogue with the others.

His sitting posture was very proper and gave the impression that this was his habit. Even though he was merely playing cards with them, from the small details, one could tell that he had a very good, cultured upbringing. When he was playing his card, Shi Yi would secretly watch him from the corner of her eye, and very amusingly, she noticed that the cards in his hands were very neatly lined-up such that at all times, they maintained a symmetrical, fan-shaped arc.

Just right. Everything about him was just right.

But it was precisely because of this that she felt a sense of distance. Regardless of how close they were sitting to one another, it still felt as if there was an invisible wall separating them.

The videographer was the most loquacious, and after chatting for a while, the conversation turned to the grades he had scored in the past. “Now that I think about it, my grades back then were really poor. My National College Entrance Exam[\[4\]](#) scores just made it past the entrance minimum for third level universities[\[5\]](#), so I barely made it into university. Teacher Zhousheng, are you classified as the type who has offered up his life to furthering scientific knowledge?”

“Not really.” He pulled out a card from his hand and placed it on the wooden table. “I simply could not think of anything, apart from scientific research, that I could do.”

The videographer fell silent.

Hong Xiaoyu smacked her lips together. “Teacher Zhousheng, don’t act so distant. Let’s talk about some common topics.”

“Alright. Go ahead.”

“Do you have any... especially tacky or uncultured hobbies or interests?” Xiaoyu asked him.

“Many. For example, watching television dramas.”

“Watching TV? That’s not really considered all that tacky or uncultured, ah.” Xiaoyu laughed, “What do you normally watch the most?”

“*Xun Qin Ji [A Step Into the Past*[\[6\]](#)].”

“Normal, very normal.” Hong Xiaoyu had finally recovered her usual confidence. “It turns out the professor of chemistry likes to watch time-travelling dramas, too, and it’s even *A Step Into the Past*. My boyfriend during university really liked watching it, too, and watched it four times.”

“I have probably watched it more than seventy times,” Zhousheng Chen stated in an unconcerned manner. “More accurately, it is seventy-nine times.”

Hong Xiaoyu fell silent as well.

This group spent the whole afternoon matching their strength against 108 playing cards. Zhousheng Chen’s student clearly worshipped him, and every now and then, he would divulge some shocking achievement of his, but most of these had to do with science and research. Shi Yi and the others did not really comprehend what he was saying so could only repeatedly express their feelings of admiration.

Towards the evening, there were gradually less patrons in the teahouse.

As for the magazine that Shi Yi had been holding, she had not flipped through even three pages.

As the sky grew dark, their spot by the window was a little chilly. The staff came over to close the window and even very attentively brought a small plate of light refreshments over for them. Hong Xiaoyu finally remembered Shi Yi, whose existence had been acknowledged as much as if she was air. “What are you reading about?”

“*Defectors from the North*.” Shi Yi wagged the book in her hand. “It’s talking about North Korea.”

“What are ‘Defectors from the North’?” He Shan tossed down two playing

cards and asked curiously.

“People who could not endure the sufferings of the North Korean famine and chose to flee to China or South Korea. In a certain sense, these people do not even have a nationality to call their own.” Zhousheng Chen’s voice was calm and even without any superfluous emotion. “If they are captured and returned back to their country, they face the crime of treason.”

“Treason? That serious?” He Shan lamented. “They still want to escape, even at the risk of the death penalty?”

The videographer smiled and patted him on the arm as he told him, “I once interviewed some North Korean defectors. They said, when people spoke about those in their family who died of starvation, they stated it like it was very normal. If that was you, would you try to escape?”

The videographer spoke these words with a show of solemnity.

Shi Yi pulled over the small plate of refreshments, selected one that looked tasty, and took a bite.

Unexpectedly, Zhousheng Chen reached over and, using his finger, turned the page of the magazine that was still in her hand. She then realized that, although Zhousheng Chen was playing cards with them, his eyes were actually on the magazine.

He finished reading the last few lines before pulling his gaze back to the cards in his hand. Pulling out two, he tossed them lightly onto the table.

Hong Xiaoyu was still enthusiastically discussing the North Korean defectors when her eyes swept over the cards he had thrown down. Immediately, she howled in anguish, “Oh no! Completely lost the game.”

And so, in this way, they squandered away the whole afternoon. When they stepped out of the teahouse, the sky was completely dark. Their videographer keenly offered to treat them out to dinner, but Zhousheng Chen unexpectedly raised his arm and took a glance at his watch. “I still have to attend a meeting tonight.” He Shan was his assistant for his few months in Xi’an, so even though he wanted to go to dinner, he could only leave with Zhousheng Chen and head

back to the research institute.

The two groups parted ways, and Zhousheng Chen lead He Shan to take the bus.

Shi Yi and the others were on the opposite side waiting for a taxi. Separated by a road, they could still see each other off in the distance.

Zhousheng Chen stood amid a large throng of people, waiting for bus route 400 that would take them back to the institute. This particular time was rush hour, and three or four buses in a row passed by, but they were all jam-packed with people.

And they, standing in a place only a dozen or so metres away from him, were also unable to snatch a taxi because there were so many people.

Shi Yi was not the least bit impatient about having to wait for a taxi.

She felt it was very good this way. Not far away from her was Zhousheng Chen. Beside him, He Shan was complaining about something. Very quickly, a smile rose onto his face, and in that same manner that was neither hurried nor impatient, he said something.

As Shi Yi observed him, she tried to guess what he might say to pacify the young research student next to him.

“If you’ve never been on Bus 400, you absolutely cannot fathom what it means to be crammed in a bus.” The videographer, Xiao Shuai, was watching Zhousheng Chen as he sighed with a grin, “But we’re in the same situation as them. Don’t even know which of us is going to be able to get back first.”

“If we can catch a cab, should we give them a ride?” Shi Yi immediately suggested.

“We’re still standing in a sea of people, and we don’t even know what we’re going to do.” Xiaoyu was utterly amused by her as she sprawled herself on Shi Yi’s shoulder and whispered, “Beautiful Shi Yi, since preschool, regardless of who wanted to play pretend prince and princess, you would still always be the princess. So, you should just happily continue being the princess. This person really does not seem interested in you. What’s that saying again? You’re not his cup of tea.”

In the space of those few sentences spoken by Xiaoyu, another bus had pulled into the stop.

Zhousheng Chen and He Shan were finally able to squeeze onto the bus, and they disappeared out of Shi Yi's sight. From beginning to end, Zhousheng Chen had not cast another glance in their direction.

[1] The young man's name is 何善 He Shan. It sounds just like 和善 (same sound to the ear but the first character is different), which means "good-natured."

[2] 大姐姐 "da jie jie." While this literally means big sister, in Chinese culture, a more casual way of addressing someone older, but probably in the same generation as you would be by "big sister" or "big brother."

[3] 双升 "shuang sheng." A four player, point-based card game using two decks, although there are variations using a single deck and three decks. It goes by many names. See [here](#) for more details on playing rules.

[4] 高考 "gao kao." Unified national examinations on various subjects held annually, usually for students in their final year of high school and are a prerequisite for any post-secondary education at the undergraduate level.

[5] As a very broad brush generalization, undergraduate university programs in China can be classified as first, second, and third level. First level are key universities in the country, second level are universities with undergraduate programs that would still have students from all over the country enrolling in them, while third level are simply local colleges or universities where most of the students would be local as well.

[6] 寻秦记. Most of you will have heard of this 2001 [TVB drama](#) starring Louis Koo and Jessica Hsuan, based on the wuxia novel of the same name by [Huang Yi](#).



[Image credit](#)

Additional Comments:

Anyone as tickled as I am about Zhousheng Chen’s love for *A Step Into the Past*?

Because I am following the labelling based on the chapter divisions of the published novel but still separating my posts based on how the novel was released online, you might be a little confused what the progress is. At the bottom of every update, I’m going to just keep a little progress tracker so everyone knows how far along we are in the novel. You can ignore it if you want.

Completed:

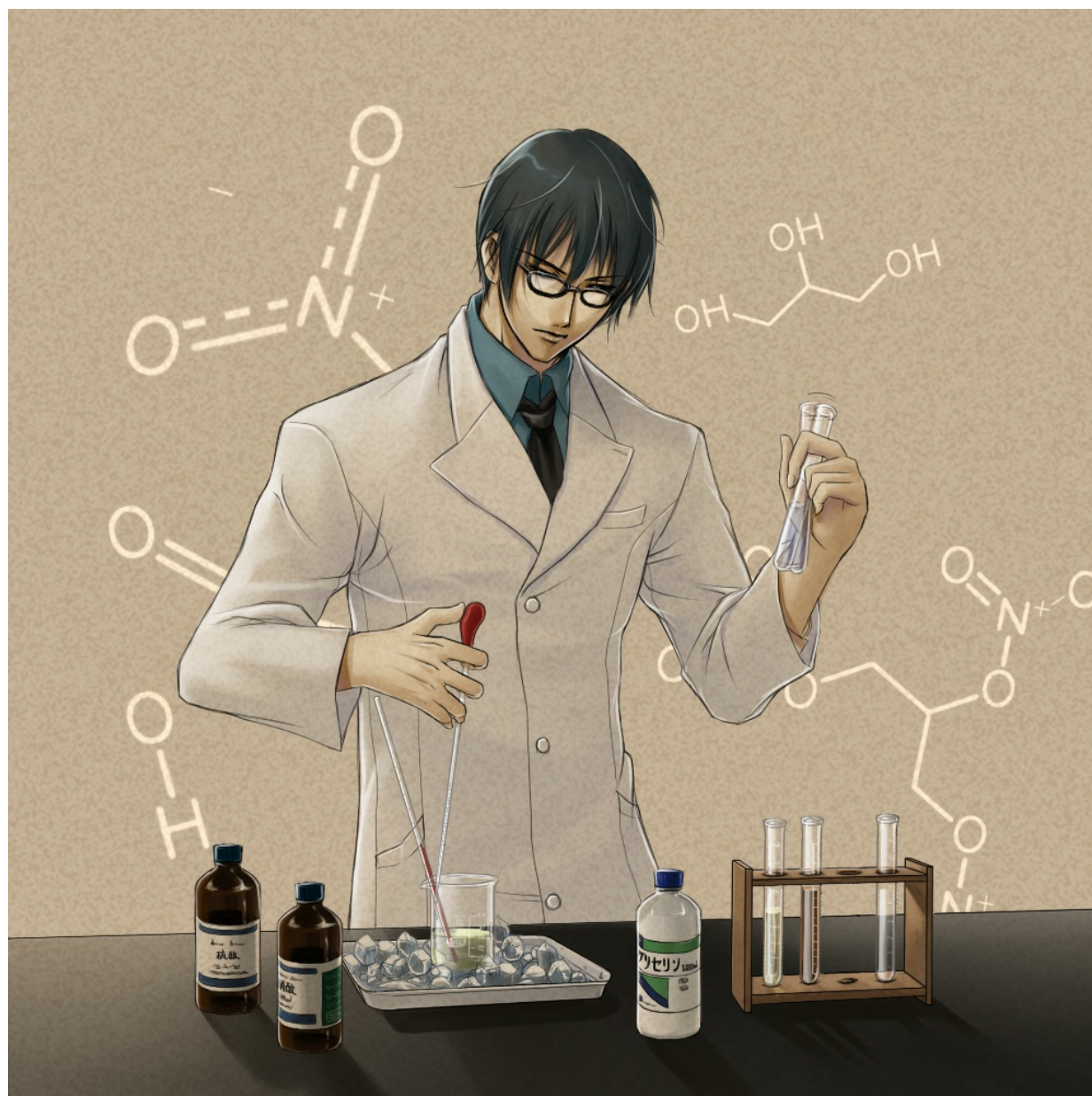
- 1 of 1 Prologue
- 3 of 56 Main story segments
- 0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 1.4

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 1.4

[March 25, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [15 Comments](#)



[Image credit](#)

I'm going to request virtual cookies for those scientific terms I ended up researching. Who knew I would be reading technical papers so I could translate a romance c-novel that talks about reincarnation? >_<

Sometimes, you're going to have to be bold to get what you want. Will anything come out of Shi Yi's act of boldness?

Chapter 1.4 – The Unfathomable Past (4)

The following day, the videographer took them to visit some well-known places in Xi'an. Amongst the tides of tourists, as Shi Yi viewed these historical sites, she had a persistent feeling of familiarity but she could no longer distinctly remember anything.

She had the impression that when she was a child, her memories from her past life were very vivid.

Slowly, though, from preschool to primary to middle through to high school, over time, all those memories gradually faded. When she thought about them again, they seemed more like a bizarre dream. If she had not over and over again told herself, "I need to see him," all those memories regarding Zhousheng Chen would have been doomed to disappear without a trace as well.

By the time their last day had arrived, the two of them were even more tired than if they had been at work. On their final day, taking advantage of the time when Xiao Shuai went home to visit his parents, they lay in the hotel, resting and also organizing their work materials for when they went back.

Shi Yi took the information her manager had sent over out to the hotel front desk to print.

The young girl working at the front desk was very polite when she heard her request and took her USB flash drive from her. "May I ask which room you are in? When it is done printing, I will send a staff member to deliver it up."

"Thank you. Room 1212." After she finished telling her, though, she felt it was not the best plan. "Don't worry about it. I will just stay here and wait. You don't need to make a copy of it, just print it directly from there."

"1212?" When the young girl heard the room number, she quickly asked, "Miss Shi?"

"Yes."

"There is a book here for you. A gentleman brought it here not long ago, and we just haven't had the chance to deliver it up to you." The girl picked up a large

manila envelope from off to the side and placed it on the reception counter. "That gentleman's surname is Zhousheng." After stating this, she muttered very cutely, "That surname is rather strange."

Shi Yi looked down at the envelope. There was no writing on it. "He just left?"

She weighed it in her hand and felt through the envelope. It should be a book inside. Xi'an city notes?

"About ten minutes ago." The girl took the USB flash drive, then motioned for someone to attend to the front desk while she stepped out from behind the counter. "If the document is very important, guests are allowed do the printing themselves. Miss Shi, please come this way."

When she heard Zhousheng Chen's name, she had started feeling disconcerted.

The girl opened up the file on the flash drive and, seeing that it was a long segment of script from a television drama, she could not help looking Shi Yi over a few more times. She sighed inwardly, no wonder this female guest was so pretty. She was an actress. But this face did not seem like it had had much exposure yet, so she was probably a newcomer?

The girl stared in appreciation at Shi Yi's face, thinking to herself that if such a truly beautiful woman really did show up on the screens in the cinemas, it would be so pleasurable to the eyes.

Shi Yi did not notice the expression on the young girl's face for her eyes were fixated on the envelope and she was lost in thought.

After she hurriedly printed off her document, the instant she entered the elevator, she tore open the envelope. Sure enough, it was the book he had mentioned at Qinglong Temple. The pages were not all that new-looking, and the corners showed signs of wear. It did appear as if someone had brought it to him for him to read. On the cover of the book was a blue sticky note:

A colleague at the research institute gave me this book. If you like it, then there is no need to return it.

Zhousheng Chen

His handwriting was beautiful, though not the same as what was in her memory.

She returned to her room, still looking at the note and re-reading it over and over again. She could not help sending him an email, asking him whether the laboratory had a telephone and if it was convenient for her to call him.

After the email was sent, she opened the book and was surprised to discover that some pages had been notated with white sticky notes of simple annotations of any differences in opinion he may have had from the book. Perhaps people who came from a science background tended to be more serious. If it was a tourist attraction, there would be notations of whether it was free admission or what the admission price was, as well as the opening hours. If it was a restaurant, there would certainly be comments regarding what specialty dishes there were known to be especially tasty.

Shi Yi knew that these notes undoubtedly had already been written previously and were not there for her sake.

However, when she saw these “exclusive notes” written on the stickies inside the book of city descriptions, she could not help thinking that, he had not removed his annotations, so at the very least, it was to make things easier for her when she read the book.

She glanced at her email inbox. Zhousheng Chen’s email had already come back.

There were no unnecessary words, just a string of numbers. Shi Yi picked up her mobile phone, and after inputting the number, she coughed a couple of times to ensure that her voice was in its best shape before she finally dialed.

“You received the book already?”

This was the first thing Zhousheng Chen said.

“Yes, thank you.” She had simply wanted to call Zhousheng Chen, but when the call was picked up, she did not know what to say.

“This book is quite well written. It is not like those normal travel diaries that are written just for the sake of publishing and making money and use large passages of writing describing personal emotions that are flowery but

impractical.” It was fortunate that there was no awkward silence from him, and he very naturally explained to her, “Nor is it like many of those city overview and travel guides which basically consist of indirect advertisements in half of the book.”

She gave an “mm” in acknowledgement and told him, “Alright, I will definitely read through it carefully.”

Looking back, this was actually the first time the two of them had spoken on the phone since they had met.

They talked, from how jam-packed the 400 bus route was the day before yesterday to yesterday’s one day tour around the city, until finally, it was Zhousheng Chen who first posed the suggestion that they should end the conversation. “I think I need to start working now.”

“I have always been curious what a scientific research institute would be like.” She put on her brazenness and requested, “Would it be convenient to let me have a look?”

Xiaoyu, who had been eavesdropping on the whole conversation, immediately glared at her: *Can you act a little more reserved, please?*

She pouted her lips: *I really am curious.*

Xiaoyu rolled her eyes, shaking her head as she sighed and laughed.

“It is dry and uninteresting.” Zhousheng Chen seemed as if he was going to decline her request, but after pausing for several seconds, he carried on, “But you are lucky. Today is Sunday and most of the researchers are off work today. It should not be a problem if I bring you around for a look.”

She quickly said “okay” and wrote down the address that Zhousheng Chen gave her.

He concluded by saying to her, “When you get to the entrance, call this same phone number. I will come down to get you.”

Shi Yi hung up the phone and, with make-up bag in hand, dashed into the washroom.

Xiaoyu hopped off the bed and, still in her bare feet, chased her to the

washroom door where she looked her in the eye through the reflection in the mirror. “Can you tell me what it is about him that makes you like him so much?”

Under the yellow glow of the light, she used a cotton pad dipped in make-up remover to thoroughly cleanse her face. Her every move was careful and meticulous, utterly revealing her nervousness as well as eager excitement. After she had finished, she turned on the faucet and returned the gaze in the mirror with a serious expression. “I feel I must have known him in my previous life and on top of that, owed him a huge debt.”

A laugh escaped from Xiaoyu. “Oh, so it’s a fate that spans a previous life and this life...”

Shi Yi smiled. It was far more than just a debt.

If he remembered even a little, he probably would not wish to see her.

Once she sat in the taxi, she showed the driver the text message Zhousheng Chen had sent her. The driver immediately smiled and told her just one hour ago, he had driven a male patron from here over to the same location, so he was very familiar with the route. Shi Yi was able to guess who he was talking about but had not expected that such a coincidence would occur.

It was actually not very far.

Shi Yi stepped out of the taxi and had just pulled out her mobile phone when she received a call from her manager, Mei Lin, who wanted to discuss her next voice-acting project. Mei Lin was a workaholic and she did not dare be rash by interrupting her, so she had no choice but to pace aimlessly back and forth in front of that sign that stated “Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xi’an Branch” and carry out her phone conversation.

Because of her unique voice, when she first entered the industry, she was presented with some good opportunities and did the voice-acting for several relatively famous roles. Coupled with Mei Lin’s connections, her asking price started to gradually rise. Plus, many producers who had actually seen her in person repeatedly tried to persuade her to switch to acting in front of the camera.

Naturally, to Mei Lin, a voice actor was not as valuable as a celebrity who showed her face on camera.

However, no matter how hard she persuaded her, Shi Yi was not interested, and in the end, after growing weary of trying to convince her, Mei Lin gave up on the idea. Occasionally, though, she would bring up the topic as a joke to test Shi Yi's interest.

"It was just yesterday that Du Yunchuan asked me whether you are someone's mistress and that's why you have no interest in money or fame. I laughed so hard at that and told him that our Shi Yi has an upright and respectable face that is made for being someone's legal wife. If she is to get married, it will most definitely be properly and legitimately." Manager Mei Lin had finished discussing business and was now starting to gossip and carry out idle chatter. "Shi Yi, tell the truth. Have you already married some anonymous rich and powerful person? Otherwise, how come all year round, you can be out having fun and vacations and can turn down roles whenever you want?"

Her head lowered, Shi Yi slowly, step after step, strode up and down as she answered with a smile, "I have no interest in rich men."

Mei Lin laughed, "Then what type do you like? Tell me, so big sister here can help you keep an eye out."

Her eyes drifted over to those gates, half a person tall, that were closed shut, and then she saw, on those large empty grounds in front of the building, a figure had already appeared. He was walking very quickly and coming closer in her direction. He was still dressed in a white laboratory coat, and inside was a light, checkered button-up shirt. When Shi Yi's eyes fell on him, Zhousheng Chen also seemed to notice her. Raising his right arm, he pointed at the small, closed door that was beside the gates.

Shi Yi looked at him and quickly nodded as she ended her phone conversation. "The person I like must be a professor, and preferably, his research is in polymer chemistry," she said in a low tone, almost like it was a joke.

"What are you talking about? Professor? Wha...?" Mei Lin was completely taken aback by this.

"I have to stop talking now. I'll call you tonight." Seeing Zhousheng Chen

approaching, she hurriedly hung up the phone and jogged over to the smaller door where she stood nicely and waited for him.

Here in this place, he seemed different from normal. She could not describe that feeling, only that he appeared quite a bit more solemn and serious.

“When did you arrive?” he asked her while pulling out a sign-in book from the small window of the security office. He signed his own name and noted the time. “Did you bring your identity card?”

“Yes.” She looked down, pulled out her identity card from her bag, and handed it to him through the fence.

When all the proper procedures had been completed, someone from within the security office unlocked the door and let her in.

It was as he had said, that because it was the weekend, there were not many people there.

As the two of them were walking together, occasionally someone would pass by and nod in hello, but there was not much verbal communication. Shi Yi seemed to be affected by this quiet atmosphere so that even her steps were careful and soft. Unfortunately, she was wearing high heels, and as she strolled down the marble floor, she could not completely prevent her feet from making noise.

The more she focused on that noise, the more careful she tried to be. The more careful she tried to be, the louder the noise appeared.

“The female researchers here also like to wear high heels.” He stopped outside a double-pane glass door and input his password and fingerprint. “You don’t have to be too concerned about it.” She nodded in response and gave an embarrassed little smile.

When the glass door had been unlocked by the password, he reached out and pushed it open, leading her in and past many rooms with walls of frosted glass. Finally, they stopped in front of an office. Only after they had pushed open the door and entered that enclosed room did Shi Yi at last feel like a great load had been taken off of her. “I’ve always thought that going into research institutes of

this sort would feel like you are trying to steal national classified information.”

“And so?” He was sitting behind his work desk as he laughed, “Are you disappointed?”

“I wouldn’t call it disappointment.” Her gaze swept around his office and she took a sniff. “The smell in here is very unique. What do you normally do? I mean, what types of experiments do you work on?”

“Halogen-free, flame-retardant silane crosslinked polyolefin elastomer, abbreviated POE, composite materials.”

Besides the last words, “composite materials,” she did not understand any of it.

She pointed to the white paper beside his hand. “Could you write it down for me? Those words that you just said.”

Zhousheng Chen did not seem to care one way or the other as he took out a pen and wrote down the words.

Shi Yi stared at that paper in silence for a while but still did not comprehend. “Is there a more simplified way of saying it to try to help me understand?”

Zhousheng Chen contemplated briefly and then told her in more straightforward terms, “Simply put, it is to develop an outer material for wires and cables that is corrosion-resistant, high heat-resistant, resistant to thermal aging, and flame-retardant. Do you understand now?”

He was smiling slightly.

“Yes.” Shi Yi mulled over this carefully and could not help laughing, “But once you explain it this way, it right away sounds like there’s no real technology involved. Doesn’t this sort of thing exist already?”

“More or less. But those are all essentially based on technology that has been around for a dozen or more years. The world has not had any major breakthrough in this to date, so the first to do it can be considered to have moved forward by a dozen plus years of technology.” Zhousheng Chen handed her a small bottle of purified water. “For example, nowadays, in China’s first-tier cities, most of the outer sheaths of their wires and cables are old and

deteriorated. Approximately 80% of them need to be replaced. This will consume an extremely large amount of resources. If the technology can be advanced such that even if it is just to prolong this by one year, that would be an astronomical figure in terms of savings and revenue.”

Shi Yi sighed admiringly, “When you explain it that way, it suddenly seems so grand and important.”

She had wanted to continue asking questions, but there was an unexpected knock on the office door. After Zhousheng Chen answered, “Come in,” the door was immediately pushed open from the outside and then He Shan’s head peeked in. The grin on his face was rather smug as he said, “Sure enough, it’s Shi Yi.”

She was a little surprised as well as somewhat embarrassed. “How did you know I’m here?”

“We have surveillance cameras in the lab. I had just come back in from outside when I heard some senior brothers say that Teacher Zhousheng had brought a fairy-like beauty with him, so I guessed that it was you.”

Surveillance cameras? Very strict security, indeed.

Zhousheng Chen gave an amused “mm-hmm,” and asked, “And so?”

“So,” He Shan told him seriously, “because it has been such hard work for Teacher Zhousheng to teach and lead us, we would like to treat you, Teacher, out for dinner, and at the same time, we can also be a host to our guest.”

End of Chapter 1

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

4 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#)

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Chapter 2.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 2.1

[March 28, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [26 Comments](#)



Shi Yi learns something about Zhousheng Chen. It looks like she really may have no chance with him in this life.

Chapter 2.1 – This Life’s Previous Incarnation (1)

“Would you like to go?” Zhousheng Chen seemed to feel that this was somewhat inappropriate, and he consulted her opinion.

“No worries. It just so happens that I haven’t eaten yet.” Shi Yi did not mind. “But I do have a request. May I take a look around your laboratory first? It was so hard to get through all those layers of security, so it would be such a pity if I didn’t at least have a look.”

He Shan had actually only intended on trying his luck and had not thought that they would actually agree to his suggestion, so he straightaway volunteered himself to show her around the laboratory. Zhousheng Chen, though, pulled out a stack of papers that required his signature, saying he needed to finish off the

rest of his work and that he would give them ten minutes to walk around.

She could sense his deliberate brush-off. Following He Shan out of his office, she listened to him enthusiastically describe the various laboratories they passed, only smiling politely in response and speaking very few words. She was very afraid that taking the initiative to ask to come here had caused him to feel like she was being rude.

Never before had she acted so impulsively and willfully before.

And now, this one-off time caused her to feel distressed and anxious. In the end, she could only remember the laboratory's name: Laboratory of Electrical Insulation and Thermal Aging. At least that could be considered as having gained an understanding of his work.

"Here, we have the nation's only large-scale thermal aging equipment capable of carrying out high voltage, up to a maximum of 60 kV, and high temperature, up to a maximum of 200°C, experiments that combine pyroelectric properties and thermal stability testing."

She nodded. Mm. Basically didn't understand any of what she heard.

Even He Shan eventually could sense her mood and he smiled shyly, "Teacher Zhousheng treats everyone that way, as if he has nothing to do with anyone. Don't let it bother you."

Shi Yi responded with an "mm-hmm" and replied, "I can tell. He does everything according to the mood he is in. If he feels like acknowledging you, then he will say an extra couple of things to you, but if he doesn't, he will just not say anything at all and not give you any face whatsoever."

"Yes, yes!" He Shan nodded his head quickly. "Just like that."

She smiled, "He has always been like that."

"You and Teacher Zhousheng have known each other for a long time?" He Shan was puzzled. "I had thought the two of you had just met."

Shi Yi did not speak. Only when they had walked out to the main entrance hall on the first floor did she finally clarify, "Indeed, it has not been long. We met by chance half a year ago in an airport and afterwards, we did not really see each

other.”

She was not a person skilled in socializing.

Fortunately, there were actually not many people at dinner, maybe five or six, and the reason they had all been at work over the weekend was because they were not Xi'an locals. They found a restaurant that was close to Xi'an Jiaotong University and asked for a small private room. Some people were responsible for ordering their dishes while others chatted cordially with Shi Yi.

Gourd-shaped chicken, mushrooms and walnuts with quick-boiled pig tripe and duck gizzard, and spicy pig kidney^[1]..... The dishes that were served were all ones that she had heard people talk about before but had never tasted.



Left to right: [gourd-shaped chicken](#), [quick-boiled pig tripe](#) and [duck gizzard](#), [spicy pig kidney](#)

There are many types of beautiful women. Most will fall into the category of “beauty is in the eye of the beholder, some will cherish this one while others will turn their nose up at her.”

Shi Yi, though, was amongst the small number that belonged to the category of “widely acknowledged to be beautiful.” Furthermore, her looks were not the least bit intimidating, so everyone had a rather favourable impression of her. By the time most of the dishes were served up onto the table, she was already well acquainted with this group from the laboratory.

Zhousheng Chen was sitting adjacent to her, but throughout the whole time, he was explaining to a postgraduate student beside him the experiment they would be performing that night.

She, on the other hand, was nibbling on her chopsticks, trying out the new flavours while, at the same time, listening to these people describe a world that she had never before been exposed to. The topic soon turned to Zhousheng

Chen. The oddest part was, besides He Shan, everyone else did not seem very acquainted with him and even asked some questions that one would only bring up when meeting someone for the first time.

However, based on his temperament and character, this was not difficult to understand. Even though he had been in Xi'an for more than a month already, perhaps he really had not said much of anything to the people who were present there.

There were many questions. He answered them politely and Shi Yi listened carefully.

She very much wanted to know everything concerning him.

Eventually, everyone started feeling apologetic that they were asking so many questions, and finally, a girl tried to wrap the conversation up with a laugh. "I heard the dean mention that numerous places had extended an invitation to Teacher Zhousheng. Why did you choose to come here?"

"There are some matters in my family that required that I return to China," Zhousheng Chen answered. "This was merely on the way."

To him, an invitation from a research institute was something that was "merely on the way."

This should have been a very discomfoting statement, but he spoke it in such honesty that it only added to the worship that the people there felt toward him. Shi Yi, however, thought that he ought to be this way.

In the end, after they finished harassing Zhousheng Chen, the subject turned to her. "Shi Yi, what do you do?"

"I'm a voice artist," she answered with a smile.

"You mean, where you dub the voices for those foreign films?"

"Yes, but also not completely." She explained to them simply, "The number of foreign-language films that are brought into the country is actually quite small, so most of the time, we provide voice acting for domestic films, animated cartoons, commercials, and so on."

“Domestic films?” a girl asked, perplexed. “We are all Chinese. Why would we specially go and dub them? You mean, it’s not the actors themselves who are speaking?”

He Shan sighed, “You are so uncultured. Haven’t you heard of something called ‘Hong Kong movies’?”

Shi Yi played along and also heaved a sigh. “You’re the one who is uncultured, yet you’re going around pointing fingers. Most TV dramas or movies, regardless of whether they are in Mandarin or Cantonese, require voice artists like us to provide dubbing, unless an actor’s voice is particular good and skilled.”

When she finished speaking, He Shan immediately became the target of everyone’s loud guffaws.

“So do voice actors all work behind the scenes? You are so pretty, why don’t you consider acting yourself?”

“That depends on the person’s individual personality.” She took a sip of grapefruit juice and continued, “For example, Zhang Hanyu started out in voice acting, but he is also very suited for being onscreen. My personality is not very good for that. I don’t like to be surrounded and watched by a lot of people, so I can only stay in the recording studio and do my work there.”

“So do you usually get to see a lot of famous stars?”

“Actors, you mean? I see them often. This is like a business. They are merely a small part of what goes onscreen. Behind the scenes, there are many, many people working alongside them, and actually, everyone is equal.”

Completely different worlds.

When they heard about the other party’s field of specialty, they would feel that it was very mysterious.

Some of the researchers found her career rather interesting and asked all sorts of questions of her.

She reflected on the taste of the dishes she had just eaten, remembered which one she found to be palatable, picked some food up with her chopsticks, and

placed them on her plate. While she was eating with head lowered, she would unconsciously listen to what he was saying. Most of them were terms and expressions that she did not know, probably words that were all related to chemistry somehow.

The voice was different. The outer appearance was different. Everything was different.

But she still could not help trying to find, from his gestures and manner by which he carried himself, any traces or clues.

Zhousheng Chen had finally finished discussing work. He glanced over at Shi Yi, who had set her chopsticks down. "You have only eaten so little?"

She frowned at him. "It wasn't little. You've just been talking the whole time and did not notice how much food I managed to snatch from them."

He said, "The food here tastes quite good."

With an "mm", she replied, "It is quite good. Basically, anywhere in the general vicinity of a university, restaurants with good food can be found."

"Teacher Zhousheng, after hearing what your friend had to say, we all want to change careers now," someone laughingly joked. "It's so nice. Your whole job is to 'speak,' unlike us where we have to work so hard."

Zhousheng Chen gave a little smile but did not reply.

Worried that the person might feel awkward because of the silence, Shi Yi considerately took control of the subject and answered for him, "Let me tell you, oh, a voice artist has to go through a long period of studying and learning."

"It's that troublesome? Is it like being a broadcaster?" someone else asked her curiously.

"No, not the same."

Under the group's curious gaze, Shi Yi, in a serious manner, suddenly put down her chopsticks and imitated a classic cartoon character: Donald Duck. No one had expected that such a beautiful girl's mouth was able to create such a wacky and bizarre sound. Even the serving staff were stunned.

“Do you understand now?” Shi Yi’s voice returned to normal, still warm and gentle as before.

He Shan sighed, “Holy cr*p!” and was finally filled with utter admiration.

The meal was more than half done, and in the brief period when Zhousheng Chen had stepped out, someone grinned and asked Shi Yi if she was his girlfriend. Taken aback, she did not utter an answer. Instead, someone clarified for the two of them, “Don’t make ridiculous remarks. I heard that Teacher Zhousheng has a fiancée already.”

Hearing this, the person who had been trying to get the gossip hurriedly apologized to her.

Shi Yi put up an unconcerned front, lowering her head to fiddle with her mobile phone as if she was checking her text messages.

When it was time to say goodbye, Zhousheng Chen did not leave with everyone else and stood by her side the whole time until the group, amid their own noisy chatter, had turned the corner at an intersection. He then waved down a taxi, opened the door for her, and said, “I’ll escort you back to the hotel.”

Shi Yi seated herself inside and then he opened the front door of the car and sat down on the front passenger side.

Along the way, the driver was listening to oldies tunes. The two of them were separated, one sitting in the front and the other in the back, so naturally, there was not much verbal interaction. She stared at the nightscape outside the window, replaying those words from dinner tonight.

He had a fiancée.

And so, he should be like any other ordinary person whose life was following a normal path. A life of being born, growing old, getting sick, dying as well as marrying and having children. There was nothing different about him, and there would not be anything different about him. In reality, she herself knew that besides being able to see those few strange snippets of her past life, she, too,

was no different from the next person.

To be born, to grow old, to get sick, to die.

After the two of them had gotten out of the taxi, Zhousheng Chen stood outside the main entrance of the hotel and indicated that they should bid farewell. Shi Yi said goodbye to him and had just turned and taken two steps away from him when, for some curious reason, she turned back toward him again. And he was still looking at her.

She walked back to him and asked unexpectedly, “Do you believe in fortune-telling?”

“In a certain sense, no, I do not.” Zhousheng Chen smiled, “However, if the fortune is a very good one, I will likely subconsciously tell myself that this might be true.”

Shi Yi stretched out her hand. “May I read your palm?”

“You know how?”

“I’ve studied it a bit,” Shi Yi made-up a reason on the spot. “But there isn’t much use to it, and it may not be very accurate.”

Zhousheng Chen laid his palm out in front of her, and Shi Yi gently clasped his fingers. Perhaps because of his years spent in a laboratory, his fingers had that distinctive roughness of a man, with just the right amount of warmth. For a moment, her heart started beating irregularly, and she hastily used her voice to conceal her emotions. “I can only see your past and cannot see things that will happen in the future.”

“My past?”

Softly, she gave an “mm” and, still holding onto his fingers, lifted her head to look straight into his eyes. “Do you believe that you have previous incarnations? I might possibly be able to see your previous life.”

The security guard standing at the front entrance watched them curiously, not understanding what these two people were doing.

A taxi cab happened to pull up right then in front of the main entrance to the

hotel. Zhousheng Chen was directly facing its headlights, and he squinted his eyes slightly as he told her in a voice that carried a smile in it, “Tell me, then.”

[1] All Shaanxi cuisine. Xi'an is in the province of Shaanxi. These non-locals are trying out well known local dishes. The Chinese names, respectively are 葫芦鸡 (sometimes known in English as hulu, or gourd, chicken), 蘑桃仁汆双脆, and 温拌腰丝.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
5 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Additional Comments:

So, this novel was written before [Really, Really Miss You](#), but all of us who have now read RRMY don't need Shi Yi to explain the awesomeness of voice actors, right? Toupai <3

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 2.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 2.2

[April 1, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [18 Comments](#)



I'm having a hard time finding a picture that says "Zhousheng Chen" to me. Most of the pics that I find are too sexy and smouldering, too bad-boy, too arrogant-looking, or too boyish. And of course, too handsome, but I can tell you searching for "average looking guy" pics does not bring up many that are usable.

Chang'er commented last update that Shi Yi's persistence should pay off, and pay off it has.

Chapter 2.2 – This Life's Previous Incarnation (2)

"I have always had this feeling..."

Shi Yi fell silent, carefully choosing her words.

Zhousheng Chen was very well-mannered and patient and did not press her, allowing her to look at his palm.

“In our previous life, we may have had the fate of knowing one another.”

She did not know how to explain it, so in the end, she could only give this vague statement. In today’s society, if she was a man and Zhousheng Chen was the woman, she reckoned, she would probably be considered a playboy.

However, with the gender reversal, this statement actually seemed very peculiar.

What should she say?

Should she tell him, they had known one another a very long time ago, or maybe, after many reincarnations, they were finally fortunate enough to encounter one another again?

Perhaps she was the only one who would believe such ridiculous words that would cause anyone else to feel as if they didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

She had been holding onto his hand for too long, so she had to let go.

As he pulled back his hand, he unexpectedly told her, “I believe what you said. Every relationship a person has is through karma and fate.” This statement really did not seem like something he would say. Shi Yi smiled awkwardly. She heard him ask, “You are leaving tomorrow?”

“I have lots of work to do. Can’t avoid it.”

“If it’s not an inconvenience, leave a phone number for me,” he said. “Sometimes, if it is inconvenient to go online, I can contact you this way.” Shi Yi thought she had misheard, and her brain momentarily went blank.

He smiled, “There’s a problem?”

“Not at all,” she blurted, but she was unable to find anything to write on and give to him.

“Recite it to me. I’ll be able to remember it.” He saw through the reason for her hesitation.

Shi Yi recited a string of numbers.

She was about to say it a second time, but Zhousheng Chen had already

noded his head and stated, “I’ve memorized it.”

The next day, she returned to Shanghai.

Her unexpected trip to Xi’an had used an entire week’s worth of time. Under pressure from Mei Lin, her manager, Shi Yi had no choice but to go into the studio everyday after lunch and record. Often, by the time her work for the day was complete, it would already be deep into the night.

When she was working, she was very serious. Usually, she would hold her A4 paper and in her mind, rehearse her lines, from the beginning to the end, twice. In that process, when she was able to find the ideal feel, she would immediately ask the recording engineer to start recording. Of course, she would occasionally recite some words wrong, but they only needed to re-record that specific line and the rest would be perfect.

“Teacher Shi, it’s good. I have no problems on my end. When the director comes, we’ll listen again to the overall effect.”

She walked out of the room to the water dispenser in the corridor and pulled out a cup. She only held it in her hand, though, not drinking as she looked out the window, preoccupied with her own thoughts.

One of the assistants of the recording studio stepped out from the elevator carrying several plastic bags of various sizes that contained drinks and late night snacks. He even was holding a white, plastic box of barbecued kebabs from a street side vendor, the ends of the bamboo skewers sticking out from the container and creating a tantalizing sight.

In a respectful manner, the assistant greeted her.

She nodded and smiled.

A single frown or smile, either one will melt the soul.

This sentence popped up in the assistant’s mind.

In the voice-acting world, the name “Shi Yi” was well-known, having reverberated like thunder for a long time already, but the number of people who

had actually seen her in person was actually not many. She was one of the golden voice artists in the industry. She had one of the most beautiful voices and was very professional. Whenever the work involved her, it was always quite effortless. Unfortunately, her time was also the hardest to arrange. But this person – this particular voice – was one that many people were unable to resist.

Even if they needed to book her more than half a year in advance, people would still wait for her to do the dubbing.

These people who spent most of their time in a recording studio should have countless dealings and interactions with other artistes, and no matter how special her voice was, there could always be a similar alternative to be found. But, famous stars were made by being sought after. The harder she was to book, the bigger her name was.

In regards to her looks, there was a story that had circulated around the industry.

When she was still a newcomer, a famous producer happened upon her in the recording studio and very directly told her that she was his ideal female lead. After she tactfully declined him several times, the wealthy producer became outraged. Everyone present grew quiet out of fear. Shi Yi left wordlessly and never returned to that recording studio again.

Many years later, she became famous.

That same producer, after hearing a demo recording of her, was struck by how beautiful her voice was and tried every possible means to arrange to meet her in person.

It went without saying that the end result was, she refused to show her face to him again.

Nobody seemed to tire of, over and over again, bringing up this little tale with its twists and turns in the story, and it even indirectly became something that helped raise her price.

By approximately eleven o'clock at night, all of the work for the day was complete, earlier than expected. Before Shi Yi left, she went to turn her mobile

phone off silent mode and discovered that an unfamiliar number had called her. Twice, in fact.

A scam call?

She tossed her phone into her purse. It fell onto her keys and there was a tinkling sound of metal.

It was Zhousheng Chen.

The moment this thought emerged in her mind, it seemed to spread uncontrollably. She took out her phone again and called that unfamiliar phone number back. The call was answered very quickly, but it was not his voice.

“Miss Shi?” An unfamiliar voice, but it was able to accurately state her name.

“Sorry. I think you may have the wrong number,” she said.

The phone quickly changed hands.

Another voice appeared: “It’s me, Zhousheng Chen.”

She very naturally answered him with an “mm.”

But also, because it was too natural a response, both of them seemed taken aback. It was fortunate they were not face to face and could avoid a lot awkwardness.

There was a brief moment of quiet. Suddenly, a beep from her phone informed her of an incoming call. Shi Yi took a glance and then quickly requested, “Could you wait for a few minutes? I need to answer a call from my mom.”

“No problem.”

After getting his answer, she felt slightly relieved and answered her mother’s phone call.

Due to her “uniqueness,” since childhood, she had never been close with her parents. She was an odd child in the eyes of her family. At the age of six or seven, because of the strange things she would say, her mother even secretly took her to see a psychiatrist. Of course, this was something that only a handful of people knew about. Otherwise her relatives, regardless of whether they were close or distant, would talk about them behind their backs.

Because of her, her mother had spent much time in worry. Shi Yi knew this very clearly.

After she had grown up and entered adulthood, she began trying to give more emotive responses. Occasionally, she would pout and act like a mother's child on the phone. Gradually, she grew accustomed to doing this and started to take the love and longing she had for her family of both lives and pour it onto her parents of this life. That was the reason why, for her mother, she would ask Zhousheng Chen to wait for her briefly.

Her mother did not have much to say, the general idea being that Shi Yi's calls had been infrequent of late and she was somewhat worried.

Although she had not come outright and been clear about what she meant, Shi Yi knew her mother was concerned that she was starting to have her "hallucinations" again.

She reassured her for a while and finally managed to end the call.

Switching back to Zhousheng Chen's call, she said, "I'm done now."

"You just finished up work?"

"Yes," she laughed, "so that's why I didn't see your calls."

"If it is convenient, how about going out for a late-night snack together?"

This was the first time he was the one to invite her out.

Without any hesitation, Shi Yi agreed. "Sure."

"Tell me the address of where you are."

Shi Yi recited it to him.

"When I have arrived, I will let you know. Do not wait by the roadside."

"Alright."

Shi Yi seated herself on the couch in the corridor. The people in the recording studio were already starting to pack-up, and besides two workrooms where the lights were still on, the remaining rooms were all dark. There were continuously people leaving and bidding goodbye to her, but she only held onto her phone and wondered why Zhousheng Chen had suddenly come to find her.

Unfortunately, she did not have an answer.

Perhaps he was simply passing through.

Very shortly, Zhousheng Chen arrived at the underground car park. When Shi Yi stepped out of the elevator, she saw him standing alone outside the elevator doors, waiting for her.

He seemed like an entirely different person. His clothes were form-fitting – a pair of white trousers, a light-colored checkered dress shirt, and even a blue sport coat. A very unexpected outfit, completely overturning the previous image of him dressed in the white laboratory coat. Very good taste.

Poised and sophisticated but not in a very conspicuous way. The latter would cause him to appear somewhat rash and unreliable, but his dress was spot-on.

Her eyes were fixed disbelievingly on him as slowly, she walked over so that she was standing in front of him.

Those clear and luminous eyes were looking at her as well.

He smiled. “Surprised?”

“Very.” Her eyes traveled over him. “Your appearance today is very befitting of your name.”

“Befitting of my name?”

“Zhousheng Chen,” she stated his name. “The feeling it evokes in people should be this.”

Zhousheng Chen.

That same name, in that time in history, should have been like this as well. Not about the skin-deep appearance but rather, the character and bearing.

He smiled, not speaking, but finding her words amusing.

“Why are you standing here to wait for me?”

“The car is parked rather far. I was afraid you would not be able to find it.”

“I come here often and am probably more familiar with this place than you.”

With a smile, he answered, “It is past midnight already, and there are only two security guards here. Are you not worried about encountering any unexpected incident?”

The habits of someone whose work was in the sciences.

He had only come this one-off time and he already knew that there were only two security guards in this car park?

Shi Yi’s lips curled up together in a smile. “Thank you.”

As they strolled over, a middle-aged gentleman was waiting beside the vehicle. Shi Yi had not noticed him until the middle-aged man approached them and suddenly addressed her smilingly, “Greetings to you, Miss Shi.”

“Hello.” Shi Yi looked over at Zhousheng Chen.

He was already opening the vehicle door for her.

She had not expected that this rare meet-up for a late night snack would give her the opportunity to see a different him, including this sort of bearing and poise that he carried, as well as the type of vehicle and chauffeur. Although she was curious, she did not have the boldness to ask him, and she only carefully observed the chauffeur after the car had exited the car park.

The man in the driver’s seat looked to be approximately fifty years old. The gloved hands gripping the steering wheel were very steady, and he was wearing a suit that was also made of high-quality fabric and had elegant details. He appeared to be someone who had been working for Zhousheng Chen for many years.

The car drove steadily along the whole way. The old chauffeur only asked them a single question, whether they wanted some water.

Zhousheng Chen declined.

So very quiet. Shi Yi peeked at him with her peripheral vision and thought to herself, something needed to be said at some point in time. “You look like you have just seen someone very important?”

Zhousheng Chen gave a nod. “A few elders.”

Shi Yi nodded.

Indeed, any subject, when given to him, could be answered with a single sentence and moreover, had no chance of being extended into further conversation.

She turned her head away to look out the window, unable to stop her grin.

Zhousheng Chen, you are such an odd person. Fortunately, I don't mind.

She had been in this city for so long now, but she had never before been to this restaurant they had come to tonight.

More accurately, it was a private, traditional, courtyard-style house[\[1\]](#).

There was someone who had been standing in waiting for them, someone to lead the way and carry the tea, and even someone on the other side of the folding screen to replenish the incense stick and trim the candlewick while people came in and out to bring food and lay out lanterns.

Her curiosity was becoming more piqued. Glancing through the screen at the outline of the figures on the other side, she asked softly, "In these midnight hours, have we mistakenly wandered into a dreamland?"

"I simply surmised that someone who likes to read books like the *Three 'Yan'* and *Two 'Pai'* would likely also appreciate such a setting."

She laughed, "I really do like it a lot. But the *Three 'Yan'* and *Two 'Pai'* are just collections of stories and are nothing worth showing off about. Some people like to read modern literature, some people like to read classical literature. It's merely a difference in preferences."

Zhousheng Chen's eyes seemed to glimmer like sunlight gleaming off billowing waves. "Sometimes, I find that you and I have things in common."

"Such as?"

He answered frankly, "I like to collect embroidery of 'Wu songs'."

Shi Yi was a little speechless. She stared at him for a while and finally could not help bursting out in a laugh. Turning her head away from him to look at the silhouettes on the other side of the screen, she protested, "That's not at all the same, okay? Your hobby is... very unique."

[1] 别院 “bie yuan.” This technically merely means “other home.” It is referring to someone’s standalone, private house (not an apartment!) but is not their main home. It could be referring to anything from a separate residence beside the owner’s main one reserved for guests or family to a vacation house in a completely different place, many miles away. However, this term usually refers to a more traditional style house. The “yuan” in the term often implies the old-style courtyard homes.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
6 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Additional Comments:

I have deliberately not footnoted “Wu songs.” The next update, MBFB will provide a brief explanation, and I’ll give a more detailed footnote then. For now, I’ll leave you to speculate what this unique hobby of Zhousheng Chen might be.

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 2.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 2.3

[April 4, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [23 Comments](#)



Hope you all have a wonderful Easter.

So, tell me, did you expect this hobby from Zhousheng Chen?

Chapter 2.3 – This Life’s Previous Incarnation (3)

If it were Hong Xiaoyu in her place, she would merely feel that this thing called “Wu songs^[1]”, just from hearing the name alone, must certainly be something very elegant and cultured.

However, she knew better. For example, Wu songs mainly were sexually suggestive, amorous poems or songs in elegant language and were for private enjoyment in the bedchambers. So, even though they had appeared approximately the same time as the *Classic of Poetry*^[2], they..... Anyways, in short, they absolutely would never appear in any school textbook.

She coughed lightly and changed the subject. “Those experiments that you do, are they hard work and exhausting?”

“Not bad,” he told her. “It depends on the situation. Where I am, there are very few girls who work there.”

“Why is that?”

“It is hard work.”

If she probed any further, it would become another conversation between a layman and an expert, and she very smartly did not continue asking along this topic.

When they actually started eating the midnight meal, there was not much verbal communication between the two of them, but it did not feel awkward, either.

“To remain silent during dining, to be wordless during slumber.” This was her practice since she was young.

Hearing it said this way made it seem as if she was very well-mannered and cultured, but in the eyes of her many relatives, this was very eccentric. For example, during the New Year or other festivities, the adults would arrange to have the teenage children all sit together at a round table off to the side, but amid the loud laughter, only she would wordlessly finish her meal and drink her soup. Then, she would set her bowl and chopsticks back down in their proper place and quietly sit there, waiting for everyone to finish their dinner before she left the table.

In the beginning, people would praise her for behaving sensibly and maturely, but gradually, she became referred to as the “weirdo” by her cousins, and in secret, she had been judged to be a very arrogant little girl.

Back then, she still had not learned to be smooth and discreet.

Later, as she gradually grew older, she constantly needed to adapt to society. For example, in the school cafeteria, she needed to fit in with all the other girls and chat while eating, or after she started working, during the occasional social dinners, she had to carry out conversation with people.

After so many years, this was the first time she encountered someone with the same habit as her.

And the happiest part about this was, that person was Zhousheng Chen.

During the entire course of the meal, his only additional action was to pick up the wooden chopsticks in the box of cakes and pastries and personally select a piece of drunken crabmeat paste for her before changing back to his own personal chopsticks and continuing to eat. Shi Yi smiled at him, suddenly feeling that this scene was very familiar. Many of those memories were fragmented and scattered already, but his every movement gave her a feeling that she had experienced this before.

Zhousheng Chen drove her back to her community compound but did not ask the chauffeur to drive in. Instead, he got out of the car and walked with her to downstairs of her apartment building and told her, “The next three months, I will be commuting back and forth between Zhenjiang and Shanghai[\[3\]](#).”

“Zhenjiang?”

“Yes, Zhenjiang. Is that odd to you?”

“Well, no. My father’s ancestral hometown is Zhenjiang.” She gave a little laugh. “Even though I don’t go back there often, hearing its name still feels a little close to my heart.”

He also chuckled. “What a coincidence.”

“Yes, such a coincidence.” She thought about it and still decided to ask out of curiosity, “Are you still not used to using a personal mobile phone?”

“Not particularly used to it, no.” He laughed. “I can be reached any time at the number in your mobile phone.”

She nodded.

And then, they both were quiet.

The security guard on night shift was sitting in the main lobby of the building. He knew Shi Yi. Such a beautiful girl. But this was the first time he had ever seen her with a man and could not contain the interested gaze he cast over at them.

“I’m going now?” Eventually, Shi Yi was the first to break the silence.

“Alright. Goodbye.”

She turned around, but as she was pulling out her card key from her bag, the glass door had already opened with a click. She paused briefly in surprise, and only when she heard the security guard’s voice from the other side of the door calling out to her in greeting to go in did she realize what had happened.

Shi Yi suddenly turned back again, gazed right at him, and said once more, “I’m going now.”

She could even visualize the look on her face, how reluctant to part from him she must look.

Zhousheng Chen’s expression softened slightly. “Goodbye.”

She saved that phone number but did not ever contact him.

She surmised, it was likely because she had apprehensions about that “fiancée” she had heard about by chance. In her twenty odd years of life, from being a young child to now an ordinary woman, she had at least learned to be realistic.

Her desire was only to see him again.

This wish that once had only one ten-thousandth probability of coming true, had actually been fulfilled, and if she made any more demands, those would just be wild, inappropriate fancies.

Not long after that night, it was the Qingming Festival[\[4\]](#).

Her paternal grandfather had passed away last year and was buried in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, so this year’s Qing Ming Festival, they naturally would have to return there to sweep the gravesite. Shortly after five o’clock in the morning, her father drove over with her mother to her home to pick her up.

A bleary-eyed Shi Yi sat in the back seat, resting herself on her mother as she drifted in and out of sleep. Three hours passed, though, and they were still stuck

in traffic on the Shanghai-Nanjing Expressway. She had been dozing from when the sky was still dark all the way until the sun was shining radiantly. The whole time, her mother had carried out casual conversation with her, likely because she feared that if the two people in the backseat both fell asleep, her father, the driver would start to feel sleepy and it would be dangerous.

Of course, since she had graduated from university, eight or nine times out of ten, the topic of their conversations would be about marriage.

“Have you had a boyfriend lately?”

“No.” Shi Yi leaned against her mother and grumbled, “No, no, no.”

“You haven’t met anyone you like?”

She did not say anything.

Her mother sensed there was something peculiar. “You have?”

“Yes,” she replied with a little laugh, “but he may be getting married soon?”

Her mother’s brows furrowed. “Did you meet him through work?”

Her father also threw a glance at them through the rearview mirror.

Shi Yi finally perceived that her words sounded very similar to those usual household dramas where the beautiful woman sticks her foot in someone else’s love relationship. Hastily, she shook her head and assured, “It’s just someone I know and have some good feelings towards. Apart from that, there’s nothing at all.”

Her parents felt slight relief after hearing this.

She tilted her head against the window and listened to her mother continue to lament that having a beautiful daughter required a lot of attention. From when Shi Yi entered middle school, her mother had started to worry that the teenage males of the community would harass her, so she would personally drop her off and pick her up from school. Fortunately, besides reading and playing the guzheng[\[5\]](#), Shi Yi did not have any other particular interests.

As a result, her mother only needed to guard against the outside bandits and did not need to fret whether her daughter would run off with a bad boy.

“Sometimes, your mom is very self-contradictory.” Her father chuckled and added, “She worries that your criteria for choosing a man is too high and you won’t get married, but also that you are too pretty and will be deceived by the rich and powerful men out there into doing something that’s not wise.”

Shi Yi’s lips turned up in a smile. “That won’t happen. I don’t like money.”

An individual who has seen life and death and the reincarnation cycle would not be ensnared in the least by any of these things, otherwise, that trip into the King of Hell’s court[\[6\]](#) would have been in vain.

When the car reached the tollbooth, they finally could see the reason for the traffic jam. Three entire tollbooths were shutdown to the public, with one of them being completely unused while all varieties of sedans were driving through on the two lanes of the two outside booths.

“Special privilege vehicles[\[7\]](#)?” Mother asked Father.

“They shouldn’t be.” Her father suddenly remembered what Little Uncle[\[8\]](#) had told him. “Oh right, I remember. Shi Feng mentioned these ten days, some rich businessman have been coming and going in Zhenjiang for some sort of investment project.”

Mother grew even more baffled. “What sort of big investment project can be done in Zhenjiang?”

“They’re not investing in Zhenjiang, it’s just the location of their meeting.” Father explained in simple terms. “China’s labour costs are the lowest in the world, so many multinational corporations want to build factories in China and then sell the product overseas. That’s why, along the Yangtze River Delta, the most thriving sector is manufacturing.”

Shi Yi laughed, “And that is the story behind ‘made in China’.”

“Basically.” Her father was a university teacher and naturally, was relatively more concerned about this sort of thing, so when he spoke about it, his points were logically argued and reasoned through. “However, these last several years, the labour wages have risen sharply and many corporations are starting to pull out of South East Asia. That’s why one after another, many little companies are

starting, to close down. It's estimated, in another five years, the manufacturing sector is going to go through an earthquake-like phenomenon and things will be turned upside down. Large numbers of workers will lose their jobs and factories will close. And if the Yangtze River Delta's economy is shaken up, it's inevitable that it will affect the entire nation's economy."

"Sure, sure." Mother was getting a headache just from listening. "What does this have to do with the traffic jam?"

"That's the reason why someone has invited all these big businessmen to invest, ah," Father answered with a laugh. "That's the attraction of economics. If you predict the catastrophe that may happen several years from now, then you need to think of a way to mitigate it before the catastrophe actually happens."

"Such foresight," Shi Yi said in assessment of the situation.

"Not only do you need foresight, you need true strengths or assets that can attract more investment," Father stated in conclusion.

With an "oh," Shi Yi added, "And you need to have a magnanimous heart to save the nation's economy."

"Yes. A magnanimous heart."

This dialogue between father and daughter managed to thoroughly amuse her mother.

During the space of their conversation, several black sedans from far away had driven over to where they were. The speed they were travelling at was not fast, not at all the speed that should be used when driving on an expressway, but still, there were cars that courteously made way for them.

Those few cars passed through the only toll exit that had been left unused.

The cars and their license plates whipped past. Shi Yi did not get a very clear look, but she kept having a sense that they looked very similar to Zhousheng Chen's vehicle.

They continued talking in this way the whole journey until they finally slowly

shuffled off the expressway.

When they reached the public cemetery, it was already past nine o'clock. What should have been a less than three-hour drive had ended up consuming four hours. It did not take long to sweep and tend to the tomb, and her parents' main reason for coming was to get together with her uncles on her father's side. Little Uncle, who owned a few factories, was the most well-off in terms of financial situation, so naturally, he took on the task of hosting the friends and relatives.

The elders and older generation were all in the living room chatting. Feeling bored, Shi Yi went into her younger cousin-sister's [\[9\]](#) room.

The little girl was still in high school, and it was the time in the day for studying diligently for her. When she saw Shi Yi, she was thrilled and dragged her over to help her with her essay topic. Shi Yi glanced it over. The topic had to do with the Qingming Festival. Very appropriate for the season.

She contemplated for a moment, then outlined the major points for her younger cousin-sister.

Setting down the pen, she noticed that on the corner of the desk, there were a number of invitations.

They were for the same event her father had mentioned on the way here with an extremely impressive list of invitees. An overwhelming majority were multinational companies and some did not even have any connection whatsoever to the manufacturing industry. Normally, Shi Yi did not pay much attention to these sorts of things, but the stamped image on the invitation caught her eye.

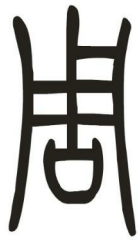
A colored image imprinted from a carved wooden stamp [\[10\]](#).

An imprint art created specifically for the invitation — imprinted manually, by hand.

However, the one Shi Yi was holding in her hand was just an ordinary machine-printed version, not an original one. At least, it was not one of the invitations that would have been personally handed to those top bosses of the financial world and was merely a duplicate for noncore invitees.

But what caught her attention the most was, in the middle of that image,

written in Lesser Seal Script[\[11\]](#), the character, “Zhou.”



It was “Zhou”, not “Zhousheng.”

Why, then, did she think of him?

Shi Yi thought of the Zhousheng Chen from that late night. So understated, yet so unique from everyone else.

“Cousin-sister, phone.” Her little cousin-sister’s head was down, working on her homework problems, and without looking up, she said, “Your mobile is ringing.”

She pulled her thoughts back and picked it up to look. Her heart suddenly felt like it was floating.

Her younger cousin-sister was present, so she was too self-conscious to clear her throat first and instead answered the phone directly.

“Miss Shi, good day.” It was the voice of the chauffeur from that night.

“Good day.” She seemed to have grown accustomed to this way of things already.

Zhousheng Chen quickly took the phone. “My apologies. I am not very familiar with how to dial on a mobile phone.”

She gave an “mm,” and answered, “It’s alright.”

“You’re in Zhenjiang?”

“Just arrived not long ago. How did you know I am here?”

He chuckled, “When you passed through the expressway tollbooth, I knew, but I just did not have a spare moment then to say a few words to you.”

[1]吴歌 “Wu ge.” A rather simplistic geographical explanation of the area historically known as the Wu Area is that it mainly encompasses Jiangnan, the southern area of the Yangtze River Delta (see footnote [1] in Chapter 1.1). The unique Chinese dialects from this area are called “Wu dialects” and are mainly spoken in Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu (where much of the novel takes place) and Zhejiang. “Wu songs” is historically the generic term for the folk songs that emerged long ago from this area and were passed down orally. Recognized as giving insight into the regional culture, they largely are about romantic love. Of course, the author has explained in more detail what that means.

[2]诗经 “Shijing.” Oldest anthology of Chinese poetry, compiled around the time of Confucius. Known as “Classic of Poetry,” “Book of Poetry,” “Book of Songs,” “Book of Odes,” *etc.* The study of the poems within this book is most certainly in Chinese education.

[3]镇江 Zhenjiang city of the Jiangsu province is approximately 260 km away from Shanghai, or about a 3 hour drive.

[4]清明节 “Qing Ming Jie”. Literally means Pure Brightness Festival. Sometimes called Tomb-Sweeping Day. 15 days after spring equinox puts this festival on a day somewhere between April 4 – 6, usually. A traditional festival in which a day is taken to pay respect to ancestors and sweep their tombs.

[5]古筝. A traditional Chinese plucked, stringed instrument, with 16 or more strings. Sometimes called a Chinese zither.



[Image credit](#)

[6]阎王殿 “Yan Wang Dian.” Yama, who is known as “Yan Wang” or “Yanluo Wang” in Chinese mythology, is the King of Hell or god of death. He passes judgment in his court on every single soul who passes through hell after they have died in the mortal world and determines their reincarnation or punishment.

[7]特权车 “te quan che.” Vehicles bearing government or military plates in

China have special privileges. They are not subject to road traffic laws, (most) tolls, and parking regulations.

[8]小叔叔 “xiao shu shu.” Father’s younger brother. The 小, which means “little”, implies that he is the youngest brother of the family, often significantly younger.

[9]堂妹 “tang mei.” Younger female patrilineal cousin. Shi Yi’s father and this cousin’s father are brothers. In Chinese culture, cousins who share the same surname (i.e. their fathers are brothers) are closer in blood than others, and they are called 堂 “tang” siblings. They would address each other as brother or sister. This cousin also calls Shi Yi just “jie” which means “older sister” or “tang jie” which means older “tang” sister. In the novel, I will use “cousin-sister” to describe their “tang” sister relationship.

[10]套色木刻水印 “tao se mu ke shui yin.” A form of wooden block printing. An image, sometimes an entire duplicate of a painting, is carved into a wooden block. Watercolor paint is carefully painted onto the wooden block before an imprint is taken by hand off of it. It was originally a way to duplicate art, including various forms of Chinese brush paintings. This is so eye-catching to Shi Yi because it would be a labour intensive and expensive process to create this just for an invitation, as everything is done by hand.

[11]小篆 “xiao zhuan.” Lesser Seal Script. An archaic form of Chinese calligraphy, standardized under the rule of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China. Compare the surname, Zhou in Lesser Seal Script (left) to the common Regular Script (right) of nowadays.



Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 3.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 3.1

[April 8, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [53 Comments](#)



An important chapter!

Chapter 3.1 – The Zhenjiang of Old (1)

“The expressway tollbooth?”

“You ought to have heard,” Zhousheng Chen said, not concealing anything, “that this particular period of time in Zhenjiang is rather special and so, there is a record of each vehicle coming in and going out of the city.”

Shi Yi somewhat understood what he was saying. “I heard, but——”

Even if there was a record, how could they find out so quickly who was actually

sitting inside that vehicle?

Unless, from the moment they entered Zhenjiang, someone had shadowed them to establish the identities of the people in the car.

Shi Yi followed this line of thought and did not ask any further.

“I have, right here, information on you and your family. It is very detailed. Therefore, so as long as your father’s car entered Zhenjiang, I would very quickly find out.” His tone sounded somewhat apologetic, but even more so, there was a rare sense of warmth in it. “As for the reason why, I will explain it to you face to face. Right now, I want to ask you a question.”

Shi Yi was a little perplexed but still did not hesitate as she said, “Go ahead to ask.”

What sort of question could it be that he would suddenly call her?

The manner in which Zhousheng Chen was speaking was very different, but when she told him to ask, he actually became quiet. Shi Yi was not hurried. She leaned over the side of the desk, picked up a pen, and tapped her cousin-sister on the forehead with it.

The latter covered her forehead and threw a fierce glare at her before lowering her head and continuing with her assignment question.

“At present, I have a need to be engaged in marriage to someone,” he suddenly spoke up.

A completely unexpected topic.

Like a cold wind had blown over her heart — so chilling — there was a sense of sadness that she was unable to cover up.

She responded with a dull, quiet “mm.”

When she was reincarnated as a human again, all her previous memories should have been erased. She violated the natural laws, and the grief, pain, and helplessness that came about as a result of that were things that she could only swallow and accept. She soon changed her position so that she was leaning against the desk and facing the window.

She knew that if Zhousheng Chen carried on, she would not be able to contain her tears.

Therefore, facing somewhere where there were no people would be much better.

Zhousheng Chen did not say any more, and she even wondered if the call had gotten cut off.

In the end, she was the one who spoke first. "I heard you have a fiancée."

"You heard?"

"Mm. When I was in Xi'an."

"I do not know her, but at the time, I accepted the arrangement of elders that had been done with kind intentions."

Shi Yi did not understand what she was hearing, but feeling somewhat sullen, she did not want to ask further.

The view before her gradually grew blurry. She did not know what to say.

"But I want to change my plan now," he continued. "Shi Yi, are you willing to become engaged in marriage to me?"

Shi Yi thought she had heard wrong.

There was no preparation time whatsoever, her unhappy mood was still hanging over her, and then, he out of the blue asked that. For a moment, she could not seem to separate space and time. Zhousheng Chen, he said...he wanted to get engaged?

"You can say no." Zhousheng Chen's tone was very indifferent.

She remembered a lot, yet at the same time, could not recall anything.

Except, it seemed, in her memories of her previous life, he had never said anything like this.

"Shi Yi?" He said her name.

"Mm...." She finally spoke, her voice still carrying a faint nasal sound. "What you said, it's..."

“It is true,” he stated. “April Fool’s Day has already passed.”

Such a pointless, silly thing to say.

And he said it so properly and matter-of-factly.

Shi Yi bit down lightly on her lip as she listened to him continue to explain.

“I have some personal reasons for doing this,” Zhousheng Chen told her. “We are not strangers to one another, and we both have favourable feelings towards each other. Perhaps we could try betrothal.”

Her thoughts were truly in turmoil from his logic. “Favourable feelings means we should get engaged?”

“I do not know many girls. If I must become engaged, I wish that it is to you and not a stranger.”

All of a sudden, there was the scraping sound of a chair being pushed against the floor. Her little cousin-sister was already leaning back and looking up at her, wide-eyed, with an expression of disbelief.

Shi Yi raised her index finger and placed it against her lips, indicating to her cousin-sister to not make a sound. Her eyes glistened with tears, but she was smiling, that gentle, tender sort of smile that could not be concealed.

The logic of Zhousheng Chen’s words was very strange, but yet, because of what he had said, she was utterly defenseless against him.

She imagined, if it had been any of the other various men who had once tried to woo her, she would certainly have hung up the phone already.

Never again would she have any sort of dealings or contact with that person.

However, only he, when he said that, would make her lose her ability to think.

Even though he had only said he had favourable feelings towards her, that she was better than a stranger.

“You can say no,” he stated a second time. “Perhaps you have better choices.”

She blurted, "I don't."

Her tone was somewhat anxious.

This actually made Zhousheng Chen chuckle. She embarrassedly listened to his laughter, feeling very awkward, but fortunately, he quickly said, "My apologies. This should have been a very romantic event, but I have made it so dry and unappealing. It was done out of urgency."

"I don't mind..."

Darn it! What am I saying?

Shi Yi's head was lowered, her eyes fixed on the white slippers on her feet. The conversation had once again come to an abrupt halt.

Zhousheng Chen seemed to be in a room completely separated from others, for when he spoke, it was very open and direct. "I believe you perhaps do not dislike me all that much. If you discover that after getting to know me better, you have absolutely no favourable feelings toward me, I will end this matter in a very fair and reasonable way and will not cause you at all to feel like you are in an awkward situation."

Shi Yi gave an "mm."

Logic that was getting more and more bizarre.

Regrettably for him, he did not realize that the subject of his negotiation had willingly thrown herself into his net already.

"I am a person who is very slow to warm-up to things. The time it takes for me to foster an emotional attachment to something is extremely long. For example, chemistry, to this day, I have been involved in it for fourteen years, but I still am not too certain whether I truly like it or not. Therefore, if you find that you cannot accept me and the way that I am, we can also break off our betrothal."

She pulled out a tissue from the tissue box and wiped away the tears at the corner of her eyes.

Sunlight shone through the window and landed on her calf. A somewhat warm sensation.

Before she knew it, he had already finished what he wanted to say.

He was waiting for her answer.

Very softly, Shi Yi presented her first question. "You have all my information and even my parents', but what I know of you is almost nothing..."

"You will find out very soon."

She hesitated for several seconds, but in fact, it was only because her mind had gone blank.

In a moment of courage, she finally answered, "Yes."

Perhaps it was because Zhousheng Chen had not expected that she would agree to it so quickly and directly.

Perhaps it was because neither of them had much experience in this.

The atmosphere all of a sudden felt awkward.

So, what should they do after suddenly agreeing over the phone to becoming engaged?

Eventually, after hesitating for a short while, he asked another question that left her wide-eyed and dumbfounded: "Would it be possible for you to tell me your body measurements?" After saying this, he was quick to clarify, "I may need to prepare some clothing for you."

That was a very sufficient reason to ask, but Shi Yi could not help glancing over at her cousin-sister beside her.

"92, 62, 90," she stated in a quiet voice.

Zhousheng Chen answered first with an "mm," then asked, "Those are..."

"The three measurements used for girls." [bust, waist, hip]

She tried as much as possible to lower her voice, but unfortunately, Zhousheng Chen was asking in too much detail.

Several expressions flitted across her little cousin-sister's face in a single second.

"Mm. I understand. Could you please wait a moment?"

Shi Yi docilely waited for him.

Up to this point, she still felt as if she was in a dream. Her cousin-sister was in no mood to do any more of her calculation problems and was waving her arms and legs in front of her, signaling that Shi Yi had better give her an honest explanation about everything. Shi Yi pursed her lips and gestured to her to go lock the door. Her cousin-sister was very obedient, and with a “click,” the lock was turned.

He had returned now and continued with more questions. “I will also need your neck circumference as well as measurements for your upper arms, lower arms, wrist, thigh, calf, and ankles.”

Those, she really did not know.

In a flustered rush, Shi Yi instructed her cousin-sister to find the measuring tape in the house. One at a time, she measured everything he had asked for and then told him. He wrote them all down, then advised her to tell her parents as soon as possible. He would be personally paying a visit to them at the home the next day.

Only after the phone call had ended did she become aware in her mind how great a stir this would cause in her family.

Her parents were both teachers and were traditional in their way of thinking. How could they accept this sudden news?

“Beautiful Shi Yi,” cousin-sister addressed her as she held her down by her shoulders and leaned in closer, “this must be a huge piece of gossip. I haven’t even heard it and my blood’s already boiling with excitement.”

Indeed, it was a huge piece of gossip.

She did not even have the strength to explain. “Let me sit for a bit and think it through.”

That was what she told her cousin.

This heaven-shaking news was delayed from lunch through to after dinner had ended, and still Shi Yi was unable to find a good time to tell her mother. What

should she tell her? Or should she just not tell her anything? But that did not seem very plausible.

Even though this was only an engagement, and even though, in this day and age, people viewed “marriage engagement” as something that was very informal, from Zhousheng Chen’s voice and manner, she sensed that, at least for his family, this was very important.

She could not continue dragging it out, otherwise, when he came to visit tomorrow, she was afraid it would bring about a huge earthquake in the house.

When it was close to retiring for the night, Shi Yi finally dragged her feet over to pull her mother into her own room, telling her she had an urgent matter she needed to discuss with her. Her mother seemed to have a sixth sense and quickly asked her whether it was about “that person” she had mentioned in the morning. When Shi Yi gave a slight nod of her head, her mother’s expression immediately grew solemn, and she sat down next to her. “Tell me about it. Let’s see if Mom can help you with anything.”

“He said,” Shi Yi exhaled lightly, “he would like to get engaged to me.”

“Engaged?” Her mother did not cover up her astonishment in the least.

“Mm-hmm. Engaged.”

“When?”

“Maybe in the next couple of days?” she guessed.

“Next couple of days?” Her mother did not know whether to laugh or cry. “Is this like kids playing house? We are going to be in Zhenjiang the next several days and won’t be going back to Shanghai. And plus, your dad and I haven’t even met him before, let alone know what kind of person he is.”

“He is in Zhenjiang.” Shi Yi chose her words carefully. “He will be coming to visit the two of you tomorrow.”

“Why must it be so quick?”

“I don’t know,” she replied honestly.

“You’ve agreed?”

Shi Yi nodded.

“How long have you known each other?”

“About a half a year or more.” Although, they had only seen each other a total of four times. Of course, she did not dare say that. “He’s also a university professor. His character is very good, very simple and pure.”

“Very simple and pure?” Her mother gave an amused chuckle. “Those words are actually not a good thing when used to describe a man.”

Shi Yi looked wordlessly at her mother, and the expression on her face was one of determination.

“Alright, I get it.” Her mother shook her head. “Let him come, then. Since you have known each other for quite some time already, you have probably thought it over already. Good thing it isn’t marriage. To you young people, getting engaged is just a formality.”

Mother’s cheerful acceptance of this caused the tightness in her heart to suddenly relax.

As she was walking out of the room, her mother all of a sudden asked, “He is from Zhenjiang as well?”

Shi Yi was taken aback briefly, and her answer came automatically. “Yes.”

It was fortunate she had not said, “I don’t know” again, otherwise, she did not even know what her mother would think.

Before she went to sleep, Zhousheng Chen called again to confirm.

Shi Yi was nestled under the covers, talking to him on the phone in a format where a single question would get a single answer. When his visit tomorrow was mentioned, she felt extremely uneasy.

This feeling was like, you merely wanted a drink of water to quench your thirst but Buddha bestowed on you an entire water well instead. You would over and over again doubt whether this whole incident was real or not. Furthermore, the two of them had only seen each other four times and were just beginning to become more acquainted with one another. And now, at the next sunrise, they

were to be engaged.

She was even worried about what she should say tomorrow when she saw him so that she would not be flustered.

“Besides getting engaged, everything about our relationship will follow a normal progression. We will not need to meddle with that.” He had actually spoken a lot today. His voice was slightly raspy, but it was still rational and astute, with the power to calm and bring peace of mind to people. “It is like, in my research, I will define a focus or direction of research before I begin experiments. It is simply a logical and scientific method of approach.”

She burst out in amused laughter.

“Shi Yi?”

“Mm.”

“Don’t feel too much pressure from this.”

“Alright.”

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

8 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 3.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 3.2

[April 11, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [24 Comments](#)



Our “ordinary” professor of chemistry brings surprises. After this chapter, can anyone still call Zhousheng Chen “ordinary”?

Chapter 3.2 – The Zhenjiang of Old (2)

The following morning, Zhousheng Chen came as promised.

The moment she opened the door, Shi Yi was once again stunned. The person before her was surprisingly wearing a pair of rimless glasses. Inside his black suit was a silver-gray dress shirt. Very serious and formal. This Western-style attire emphasized his tall build even more.

With her hand still against the door, Shi Yi forgot to move out of the way. The two of them stood there staring at one another.

Everyone else was being treated as if they were just decorations.

He smiled as he looked at her. "Is it an inconvenient time for me to come in?"

She made herself as much as possible act normally. Curious, she stretched out her hand and waved it in front of his eyes. "You're nearsighted?"

"I have slight farsightedness."

Laughing, she murmured, "Farsightedness? Isn't that just 'old eyes' [presbyopia]?"

Standing behind him was the same driver, who, as usual, had come along with him, as well as two men and two women.

When they heard Shi Yi mutter this, they all wanted to laugh but instead, they only politely bowed their heads to hide their expressions.

Zhousheng Chen did not seem to be bothered by this. He scrutinized her and remarked, "You did not sleep well?"

Puzzled, she answered, "No."

With his finger, he drew an arc under his own eye. "Right here on you seems to indicate that you did not sleep well."

Out of courtesy, he spoke in a very low voice.

Unfortunately, these words still managed to go straight into the ears of the people behind him. Shi Yi was slightly embarrassed that he had exposed the fact in front of these strangers that she had tossed and turned the whole night.

Very luckily for her, her parents had just walked out from the living room to where they were, and it gave her the opportunity to escape for a little while.

As the actual masters of the house, Shi Yi's Little Uncle and Aunt also came out to greet the guests. From the moment he entered the house to when he at last sat down and took the tea presented to him, everything Zhousheng Chen did was above reproach. Even her father, who had previously been somewhat

displeased, started to display an approving smile. The whole time prior, Shi Yi had merely watched and observed, and only now was she able to set her heart at ease.

“The body, hair, and skin are all received from the parents.[\[1\]](#)” This was something that was etched deep into her heart, so she of course hoped that her parents would truly like him as well.

From the looks of it, besides finding the five people standing behind him rather peculiar, her older generation family members all seemed to have a very good impression of him.

“Because of health reasons, Mother is unable to journey outside, but she has asked me to express her regards.” When Zhousheng Chen said this, the middle-aged man behind him had already placed a box, six or seven feet in length and made of yellow rosewood, on the table. “This is a gift for you, Uncle.”

The box was opened, and inside were nine miniature, traditional-style screens standing side by side.

They were mainly made of green jade except for the bases, where the jade was a pale white color. Everyone was somewhat astonished by this gift. Shi Yi carefully looked them over several times and discovered that the most incredible part was the raised scene that had been carved into the screens: migrating geese of autumn filling the sky; pavilions, terraces, and towers; palace maids, each one distinct and unique, inside the tall buildings, some sitting, some lying down, their beautiful hair piled high on their heads.



What the nine

screens might look like, except the colour of the base and the screen are reversed. ([Image credit](#))

“How many palace maids are on these?” Her little cousin-sister was unable to contain herself and asked quietly.

“There are exactly 999.” Zhousheng Chen turned his head slightly so that, out of courtesy, he was looking directly at her cousin-sister. “It is said that if a person has no fated affinity with it, he or she will not be able to count all of them. Should you get the chance, you could try.”

Mother wanted to decline the gift and repeatedly told him that he was being too kind.

Unfortunately, Zhousheng Chen had already laid out the circumstances in his favour, stating that it was an expression of his mother’s regards. That very generous mother was not able to come, so how could they possibly tell him to bring the gift back with him again?

One after another, gifts were laid out in front of them.

Eventually, the entire room grew rather quiet. Only when Shi Yi’s little cousin-sister was curious would he very simply state the name of these items, and unless he was asked, he would not at all describe their origins or history and instead, presented them as if they were normal gifts. From a set of six blue and white “qing hua” porcelain [\[2\]](#) goblets with designs of pines and plum blossoms on them, to a gilded turtle-shaped ornament made of silver, to the white, glazed meiping vase with an incised floral design against a pearl-like pattern background [\[3\]](#). Each elder in the family had something, no one was forgotten.



Example of a “qing hua” goblet from Ming dynasty (left, [image credit](#)) and a white, glazed moping vase with floral design and pearl pattern from Song dynasty (right, [image credit](#))

Even her little cousin-sister was presented with a jade pendant, so brilliantly green it was scary, carved in the shape of a peach.

The astonishment Shi Yi felt was not the least bit less than her family members.

However, she had to pretend that she knew about all of this and understood Zhousheng Chen’s background. Even when her mother threw frequent questioning gazes at her, she would only smile unperturbedly and nod her head, indicating to her mother that she should accept them.

These extremely cultured and shocking gifts caused every elder present to start speaking more formally and properly.

Later, her aunt took advantage of the opportunity when she went to pour some water to pull Shi Yi into the kitchen and very anxiously asked her where they should go to have lunch so that Shi Yi would not lose too much face. Shi Yi was unsure whether she should laugh or cry at this question and answered softly, “You don’t need to worry about lunch. He said his mom wants to invite me to lunch, so I will be leaving with him in a little while.”

“Oh, that’s good.” Her aunt breathed out in relief, but then quickly felt a little embarrassed and apologetic. “It’s not that I don’t want to be a host to your boyfriend. I really have never entertained someone like him. I honestly don’t

even know what he would normally eat.”

What did he eat?

Shi Yi recalled their time together in Xi'an. Nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, they had even eaten at Mi Family Paomo.

But if she said that now, it was obvious her aunt would never believe her.

Zhousheng Chen repeatedly expressed his remorse over his need to leave with Shi Yi first and not stay for lunch. Even her parents started to feel flustered and over and over again told him that was the proper thing to do, that they had not prepared a gift for his mother for this occasion of their first meeting and they were truly apologetic about it.

As Shi Yi listened to them talk about being apologetic for this and sorry for that, she finally could not endure it any longer and lightly tugged at Zhousheng Chen's clothes. "Alright then, shall we go? Wait for me a few minutes. I'm going to go change into something a little more formal."

He gave a faint nod.

Shi Yi had originally had an outfit prepared, but now, she was starting to feel apprehensive again. In a quiet voice, she asked him, "Your mom, what does she like girls to wear?"

"Anything will be alright," he said. "You need not put rigorous thought into it."

"That's not right." Shi Yi was rather distressed. "This is showing respect for her. After all, this is the first time I am meeting her."

She said this out of anxiety, and it actually came out like she was pouting coyly.

Hearing this, Mother smiled and left her bedroom.

However, because of her mother's departure, the atmosphere in the room grew awkward again.

Shi Yi discovered that her manner of speaking sounded like she was very dependent on him.

"Last night, they prepared some traditional Chinese cheongsam[\[4\]](#). My family

is rather traditional and the young women tend to wear these.” He smiled at her, not intending to force her in any way. “If you do not mind, I can tell them to bring the garments in.”

Of course she did not mind.

For no reason other than that she wanted his mother’s first impression of her to be perfect — very much wanted it.

Moreover, after that night’s late night meal and today’s gifts, she could generally guess what type of family background he came from – a very traditional family, one that even possibly had many rules that hindered people, like shackles. Similar to the nobility and aristocrats found in history, their food, attire, dwelling places, and articles for use would all follow a set standard or model, but this was not because of a desire for aesthetics or excellence. Rather, this was merely because they were traditions passed on from previous generations.

Shi Yi marveled, how could there still be such a family in present day society?

It was as if they were separate from the ways of the world.

Perhaps she would soon find out the answer to this.

The two middle-aged women who had come with Zhousheng Chen started to methodically pull out from the hand-carry cases they had brought with them a cheongsam as well as some modern equipment. As Shi Yi watched them iron the cheongsam, she could not help sighing, “Such high standards.”

Zhousheng Chen smiled at her without saying anything.

He left the room shortly, giving her space to change her clothes.

One of the women who was assisting her in changing suddenly addressed her with a smile. “Miss Shi Yi, please don’t take offense. This time, we are too rushed. Should this have been at the home and the ironing had been done so shoddily, the chief household steward would have deducted our wages.” Following along down one side of the cheongsam, she started to inspect where the fit might not be quite right because after all, there was a difference in

making a dress simply based on measurements and actually trying the garment on in person.

Shi Yi inquired curiously, "When at home, then, what do you do?"

"The old saying is, '30% tailoring, 70% ironing'," she laughed. "Very painstaking and detailed."

The woman did not speak anymore as she very skillfully took in the waist that had been a little loose. The other woman was very carefully opening up another deep red, wooden box and helping her put on jewelry.

Hanging over her chest was a jadeite necklace, encircling her wrist was a jade bangle inlaid with gold, and on her fingers were two rings. Each one of these had a simple, classically elegant feel. Shi Yi was not particularly fond of wearing jewelry and only had a pair of small diamond stud earrings on her earlobes. The woman who was helping her with the jewelry consulted her whether she wanted to change them. She did not really take it to heart. "Do his parents not like these types of things?"

The two women exchanged a glance and answered with a smile, "Yes, she is not fond of this type."

"Then let's change them." She removed the stud earrings, that were sparkling with small glimmers of light, herself and put on a pair of drop earrings made of jade, the green colour so gleaming it seemed as if it was going to drip water.

When Zhousheng Chen had been in the room a moment ago, he had said he would not force her to do anything she did not want to. The two women, therefore, had the impression that Shi Yi was a very difficult girl to serve and were rather surprised by her easygoing nature. After she was adorned in the entire outfit, she looked at herself in the mirror.

Like time had turned back one hundred years.

When she exited her room and walked into the living room, her mother was even more astounded. Fortunately, her mother was understanding and sensible and did not question the matter.

Zhousheng Chen arose to his feet from the sofa. Her relaxed, nonchalant manner from just a moment ago had disappeared, and she watched him a little

anxiously, her self-confidence reduced to a meager amount. On the other hand, her little cousin-sister very softly, as if she dared not speak in a loud voice, murmured, “I’m going to go crazy! So stunningly gorgeous[5].”

Amused, Shi Yi glanced over at her, but, with a twinkle in her eye, her little cousin-sister teased, “Beautiful maiden, I’m not talking about you, I’m talking about the stuff you’re wearing. They must be worth the value of half the country, ah.”

Her words caused everyone present to burst out in chuckles.

But what she noticed was the undisguised praise and admiration in Zhousheng Chen’s eyes.

In the car, Zhousheng Chen personally handed her a solid, circle-shaped necklace made of pure gold, which even had a longevity lock[6] hanging from it. It was apparent that the value of this piece could not compare to any of the ones she was wearing, but she could also sense that this necklace was very important. Shi Yi put it on, and with her hand covering the little golden lock hanging from her neck, she asked softly, “Is your family involved in politics?”



Longevity lock ([image credit](#))

He shook his head. “Zhousheng family rules state that descendants falling within the Zhousheng surname must not hold a political office.”

“Within the surname? You mean, within the direct line of descent?”

“The scope is even narrower than that.” He explained in simple terms, “Each generation, only the eldest son in the direct line can take the surname of Zhousheng.”

“What about those in a collateral line of descent?”

“They are surnamed Zhou.”

“So what you’re saying is, if your father had two sons and you were the eldest, you would have the surname Zhousheng? And your younger brother would have the surname Zhou?”

For a brief instant, a subtle change flashed across the expression on his face, but very quickly, he smiled, “More or less.”

She gave an “oh” and then continued to ask, “Then, business? A family where generation after generation is in business?”

Otherwise, how could they accumulate such great family wealth and estate?

Contrary to her expectations, though, he shook his head yet again. “The older generation’s views are rather old-fashioned, and they do not approve of us, the younger generation, going into business.”

She could not think of anything else.

“It is very complicated.” He wordlessly and slowly smiled. “Most of it is wealth accumulated by the previous generations, so the younger generation does not really need to do anything in particular. Hence, most have chosen to do things that they like.”

“Like you, for example?”

“Is my occupation very special?” He laughed, “I have a younger cousin of a different surname whom I am a little more acquainted with. He is a nuclear engineer and furthermore, he does not have allegiance to any particular country — a very dangerous and legendary sort of person. There are many unusual people in my family, but most of them, I am not very well-acquainted with. Since I entered university at age fourteen and started my studies of chemistry, most of my time has been spent in a laboratory. My life is actually extremely dry and monotonous.”

Shi Yi listened to him, fascinated. Even though Zhousheng Chen said this, she still felt he was the most special.

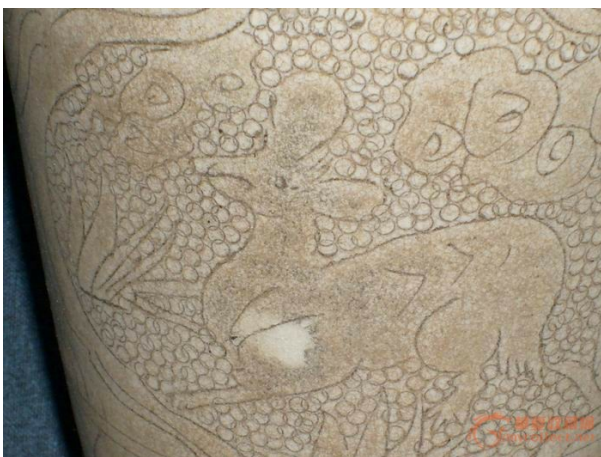
To her, Zhousheng Chen was unique, whether it was in the previous life or this

life.

[1]身体发肤，受之父母. A very famous line taken from 孝经 Xiao Jing [Classic of Filial Piety], a classic of Confucian philosophy on filial piety, which is a virtue of respect towards one's parents and family elders (grandparents, uncles, elder siblings, etc.) This line means that your parents are deserving of your filial piety as they were the ones who gave you life and your body. Because your body was a gift from your parents, you should not do anything to harm it.

[2]青花 “qing hua.” This form of porcelain has a long history in China, dating back as early as the Tang dynasty. A design is drawn with a blue pigment, usually cobalt oxide, onto white pottery, then covered with a transparent glaze. The piece is then baked at high temperatures.

[3]白釉珍珠花卉纹梅瓶. A meiping vase or bottle started out as a bottle to contain wine but evolved to so that it became a vase to display branches of plum blossoms, hence it's name, “meiping”, which means “plum blossom vase.” The 珍珠 or “pearl” in the description of this particular meiping is describing a specific design where many small, circular patterns are etched into the piece, often as a background to the main design. You can see it on the picture of the meiping I provided in the main body of the text. Here is also a zoomed-in picture of a different “pearl design.”



[Image Credit](#)

[4]旗袍 “qipao.” A form-fitting, one piece dress. If any of you have watched movies or dramas (e.g. The Bund) set in Shanghai in the Min Guo period, you will be familiar with this dress that was made popular during that era, although this piece of clothing was actually modified from the dress of the Manchu women

during the Qing dynasty.



[Image Credit](#)

[5] 倾国倾城 “qing guo qing cheng.” Literally, this means “downfall of a country and city.” This idiom describes beauty that can cause the ruin of a country or a city. (*Really, Really Miss You* readers, I expect you to recognize this right away. Can we say, “unrivalled allure”?)

[6] 百岁锁 “bai sui suo.” Literally means a “100 years lock.” The longevity lock is given usually to a baby, although adults can have them as well, as a blessing of health, good luck, and long life. They can be made of jade, silver, gold, *etc.* They are usually kept as keepsakes.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

9 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 3.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 3.3

[April 15, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [34 Comments](#)



It's a "meet the parent." Not quite the same as what we were talking about for Sheng Sheng and Toupai.

Chapter 3.3 – The Zhenjiang of Old (3)

Although this place, Zhenjiang, was the ancestral hometown of Shi Yi's father,

they did not come here often.

Like most of the other cities south of the Yangtze River, there was a lake and temples, mountains and hills of varying heights, and stories to tell. Their car drove beside the lake, and off in the distance Jinshan [Golden Mountain] Temple could be seen, misty and indistinct through a curtain of rain.



Jinshan Temple off in the distance ([image credit](#))

That morning, it had still only been cloudy but now, there were already signs that the rain would turn to a downpour.

Would they be stopping near here? Or would they continue driving?

Every few minutes, she would guess whether the car would be coming to a halt at any time now.

Unfortunately, they continued travelling south until the vehicle had entered into the mountains, and still there were no signs of stopping.

The mountain road seemed as if it had been painted by the misty rain and was very enchanting.

“My mother,” Zhousheng Chen suddenly spoke up, “she may behave somewhat coolly towards you.”

Hearing the seriousness in his tone, Shi Yi again could not hold back her anxiousness. “Because my family is too ordinary?”

“It’s not you. It is because my family is somewhat different.”

That was very evident.

Shi Yi unconsciously twirled the gold-inlaid jade bangle on her wrist. “Are there any sort of taboos I should be aware of? For example, your mother doesn’t like

people talking about certain things? Or when we meet, is there anything I should pay special attention to?”

“There are no taboos of any sort,” he replied. “My family members are not like ferocious tigers or wild beasts. It is just that, you are not a girl that she knows. She might need some time to get to know you.”

She responded with an “oh.”

Recalling what he had once said, she asked, “You said, you have very complete information on me and even my family?”

“Yes, very detailed,” he said simply. “So detailed that it contains information for each year of your life, ever since you were young.”

Shi Yi could not really believe this.

“Our —” He seemed to be recalling the day they first met, and with a smile, he explained slowly, “— first meeting was too unique and so, there were some necessary procedures that needed to be undertaken to understand who you are.”

She had not thought that such a romantic encounter could be described by him as if she had intentionally tried to get close to him.

However, after a few seconds, she relaxed again. She really had deliberately tried to meet him. If she were to say that it was unintentional, even she would not believe herself.

His elbow was resting on a wooden armrest that was on one side. He leaned forward slightly, and it seemed as if he wanted to remove his jacket. Because of his tall figure, there was not quite enough space in the vehicle interior for him to stretch out, and his movements seemed awkward and uncomfortable. Shi Yi casually pulled on one of his sleeves for him and helped him take it off.

Two people, one who had removed his jacket because he had felt constrained, the other just lending a helping hand in passing.

Because of her assistance, the garment was now in her hands.

It still had a little warmth on it, and as she hugged it in her arms, she suddenly felt lightheaded.

“I will hold it.” While Zhousheng Chen said this, he had already taken the jacket and placed it across his lap.

This brief little interlude inexplicably seemed to create a slight sense of closeness between the two of them. She could feel her heartbeat had become somewhat irregular, and she turned her head away to continue staring out at the mountain forest shrouded in the misty rain. For her, she truly could not forget him, could not free herself from him. But what about him? Why did he suddenly become engaged? If it was according to as he had said, that he “had a need to be engaged in marriage to someone,” then what was the reason for the need?

She belatedly started to mull over these questions.

She wondered, how would they carry out this role of being a betrothed couple?

Observing that she seemed lost in thought, Zhousheng Chen did not speak anymore or disturb her. He was accustomed to being alone so naturally, was also used to not intruding on other people.

When, finally, some scattered buildings appeared in her vision, she heard Zhousheng Chen say, “You will gradually come to realize that I was not calling you into question. All of it was just necessary procedures.” He spoke this calmly in a light and measured voice. There was nothing out of the ordinary about his tone, but it was apparent that he said this to make her feel better.

Shi Yi turned back and smiled at him. “You will also gradually realize that I am a very forgiving person. I usually will not get all that angry over ordinary little matters.”

Their car came to a halt in front of a very old-style manor. Someone was waiting at the front doorway.

He stepped out of the car, handed his suit jacket to the young man who had been waiting at the door, and, holding up an umbrella, crooked his arm slightly. “May I?”

She nodded, feeling as if the two of them were acting out a play.

Zhousheng Chen bent forward slightly to accommodate her level as she came

out of the vehicle. Shi Yi stretched out a leg onto the wet brick ground, and very quickly took his forearm. She was wearing a long-sleeved cheongsam while he had only had on a thin dress shirt. Through two thin layers of fabric, they were both still able to sense the warmth of each other's bodies.

Her mind was unable to focus, and she had walked a dozen or so steps before she started to pay attention to this place with courtyard upon courtyard.

Even though it was an old dwelling, its drainage was designed very well.

The rain was coming down so hard, yet along the entire way as they walked in, they did not encounter any accumulated water.

"You lived here from childhood?" She unobtrusively took in the surrounding scenery along the way.

"Before I was fourteen years old, I lived here for sometime," he told her. "It was not a long period of time, though."

She nodded.

Because he said he had once lived here, she immediately felt that this lonely, old manor in the curtain of rain seemed closer and dearer to her heart.

They would frequently come upon people hurrying by, all of them coming from side doorways or small pathways. When they saw Zhousheng Chen, they would all stop and bow slightly towards him. Those who were far away would not say anything, but those who were close would greet him as "Eldest Young Master." Hearing this remarkable form of address, Shi Yi stole a glimpse of him out of the corner of her eye. He, though, was extremely indifferent, most of the time not showing any reaction.

He merely addressed the young man who was leading the way for them: "Take us directly to see Madam."

The Zhousheng Chen in the airport who had been hurrying on his way, the Zhousheng Chen at Qinglong Temple who had occasionally conversed and laughed, the Zhousheng Chen in Shanghai who had seemed somewhat mysterious — none of them had anything to do with this man right here in this

moment.

As they stepped into a pavilion that was a shelter from the rain and someone meticulously wiped away the water on their shoes, this feeling became even stronger. Inside the pavilion, there were a dozen or so women, middle-aged as well as young girls, giggling and chatting, and when they arrived, these women instinctively rose to their feet or sat more upright.

Every gaze inconspicuously fell on her.

Zhousheng Chen, though, did not exchange any polite greetings with anyone and seemed as if he was not very acquainted with any of them.

Only the woman sitting on a wicker chair in the northwest corner did not show any reaction.

Judging simply from her bearing and sitting posture, Shi Yi was able to guess that this extremely dignified middle-aged woman was Zhousheng Chen's mother. While she was conjecturing, the woman had already spoken. "And this young miss is...?"

"She is Shi Yi." Zhousheng Chen took her hand that had been on his arm and held it gently.

Everyone's expressions showed astonishment, and some even evidently did not understand.

Shi Yi could hear her own heart thumping violently against her chest from uneasiness and apprehension.

Zhousheng Chen's mother stared at her for several seconds, then very, very slowly turned her lips up in a smile. "Miss Shi Yi, hello."

"Auntie^[1], hello," Shi Yi answered.

A quiet, composed voice gently slid into everyone's ear.

She made herself smile as much as possible and appear humble as she willingly accepted his mother's scrutinizing gaze.

The noise of the falling rain seemed to amplify the mood of this moment.

She was not certain the reason, but she sensed that his mother was not simply “cool” towards her, as he had described, and truly did not like her.

What followed confirmed this fact.

Zhousheng Chen’s mother merely very graciously asked her if she had had lunch yet. When she learned that Shi Yi had not eaten, she said in a natural, gentle tone, “Miss Shi Yi, I am extremely sorry. These next several days are in recognition of the Qingming Festival and are also the Zhousheng family’s days of partaking in cold food^[2], where open flames or heat are not to be used to cook foods. I, therefore, shall not invite you to stay here for lunch and shall instead let my son have the honour of acting as host and choosing an appropriate location somewhere in Zhenjiang to entertain you. Is that alright?”

A very tactful way of ordering the guest to leave.

She completely had no choice in the matter and could only nod her head in agreement as she replied, “Thank you, Auntie.”

His mother, with someone’s assistance, had already risen to her feet from the wicker chair and was serenely adjusting the shawl on her shoulders. “My apologies, Miss Shi Yi.” A smile was still on her lips, and after giving a nod to Shi Yi, she gently patted Zhousheng Chen’s right arm. “After you have taken Miss Shi Yi back, come talk with Mother. We have not seen one another for a long time, and we, mother and son, have become unfamiliar with one another.”

Zhousheng Chen’s voice did not carry any emotion in it. “I may not return here tonight.”

“If you do not have time tonight, then tomorrow morning.”

The gazes of this mother and son pair met and then separated again. His mother left the rain shelter pavilion, leaving behind a pavilion full of irrelevant people who were still continuing to assess Shi Yi with various different expressions on their faces. Zhousheng Chen squeezed her hand lightly. “We will go now.”

Despite having prepared herself ahead of time, it was still hurtful.

Dressing up so finely and with such care, nervously awaiting this meeting, yet it had so hastily ended. This scenario was one that had not even crossed Shi Yi’s

mind.

Later, the two of them were once again in the car and leaving that place, from an old manor that carried a strong feeling of history back into the modern city.

They had lunch in a private dining room on the second floor of a restaurant that they had made reservations for ahead of time. Their window overlooked a lake.

She did not eat much, simply drinking tea and watching him eat.

The more contact she had with him, the more she could tell that he had had a very fine upbringing since he was a child. Even the manner he held his chopsticks and his practices when he picked up food with them were extremely precise. Freedom to do as he pleased within the rules — that was likely the way he functioned as a result of his personality.

“I had thought, after telling you ahead of time what her reaction would be, you would be prepared.” Zhousheng Chen took a small sip of tea and said rather unconcernedly, “Or at least, you would not allow yourself to be so upset.”

She smiled embarrassedly. “I did not expect that your mother would be so opposed to me.”

“In her eyes, my betrothal is an extremely important matter, and furthermore, long ago, when I was still a teenager, she had already started selecting potential candidates whom she believed were suitable to be my wife.” He leaned back lightly against the seat and, in an utterly serious tone, told her, “When a person, who had began preparing a gift more than a dozen years ago, finds out that, in the end, that gift is completely useless, the feeling of disappointment is inevitable.”

She all of a sudden understood. It was no wonder, then, that the look in his mother’s eyes when she looked at her was questioning but also had a sense of disappointment.

But, starting the wife selection process when someone was only a teenager was truly unheard of.

“She chose some candidates and then was going to leave the final selection to you?”

He took a sip of tea, purposely overlooking this question.

She lowered her head and thought, why did he always have experiences in his life that made it difficult for people to get close to him?

Yet, it had to be this way or else it would not be considered befitting of him.

“Are you still angry?” he asked her.

Shi Yi pressed her lips together, wanting to smile but not doing so, and instead joked, “No, I’m just curious about the way your family would have you choose your wife.”

“Very curious?”

“A little bit.” She deliberately wanted to make things difficult for him. “If you will tell me, I might find it entertaining and then not be angry anymore.”

He seemed to be contemplating. “If you will be happy, I could consider letting you have a look.”

He quickly turned his head to the side, summoned the middle-aged chauffeur who had been waiting in attention at the door, and said something.

The chauffeur could not hold back a smile and cast a cryptic glance at Shi Yi.

Soon, the chauffeur had left and come back once again, bringing with him an incredibly thick folder that he had actually deliberately gone back to retrieve. Shi Yi opened it and discovered that it contained very detailed profiles of people. Perhaps the person who prepared this book did not like taking high definition photographs, for accompanying the written descriptions were various hand-drawn portraits.

“There really are people who are willing to put their daughter’s name in here for you to look over?” She felt awkward from just flipping through the pages, so she truly could not imagine Zhousheng Chen holding these in his hand with

people beside him asking him whom he was interested in.

“They are all from families who are long time friends of the Zhousheng family,” he answered.

She gave an “oh” and did not feel right to keep flipping through. “You are really like those emperors or nobles of the past. Such complicated rules and practices in order to marry your wife.”

Selecting from a daughter of an aristocratic or influential family whose birth time eight characters[3] was compatible with his — a very traditional, orthodox approach.

But, if this approach was taken in the twenty-first century, would it not be considered to be too bizarre?

What type of family did he come from that these wealthy, highborn young ladies would willingly offer up their portraits? Shi Yi had heard that many family-held corporations had their own large families in which there were young girls who were brought up in a sheltered environment and were born specifically to be wedded off in a matrimony joining families of equal status. Even though this was all hearsay to her, she knew that this sort of equal status marriage required the guarantee of wealth and assets to bring about the union.

The more she brooded over this, the more she wanted to look at him.

Zhousheng Chen, on the other hand, had moved his gaze to her hands. “Those two rings, is their size right for you?”

Shi Yi used her fingers to gently rotate the rings and replied honestly. “They are a little loose, but they won’t fall off.”

He nodded.

“Why?”

“If I know approximately what size you are, when I select an engagement ring, I will not make any gross errors.”

[1]伯母 “bo mu.” This means aunt or auntie, but it is a much more polite and formal form of address (to someone approximately your mother’s age) than the

阿姨 “a yi”, which is also translated as auntie but is less formal.

[2] 寒食日 “Han Shi Ri” or the Cold Food Festival. A traditional Chinese festival that begins one or two days prior to Qingming. It is actually a very old festival and used to include ancestral worship as well as consuming food that was cold. However, recognition of the Cold Food Festival has largely disappeared within most of China and the practices have mainly been amalgamated into Qingming.

[3] 生辰八字 “sheng chen ba zi.” One’s birth time eight characters (also called birth time *ba zi* or Four Pillars of Destiny) is made up of the year, month, day, and time of one’s birth, and these four things (each described by a two-character name, hence eight characters in total) are supposed to determine one’s unique personality and a map for one’s destiny (e.g. marriage, career, etc).

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

10 of 56 Main story segments

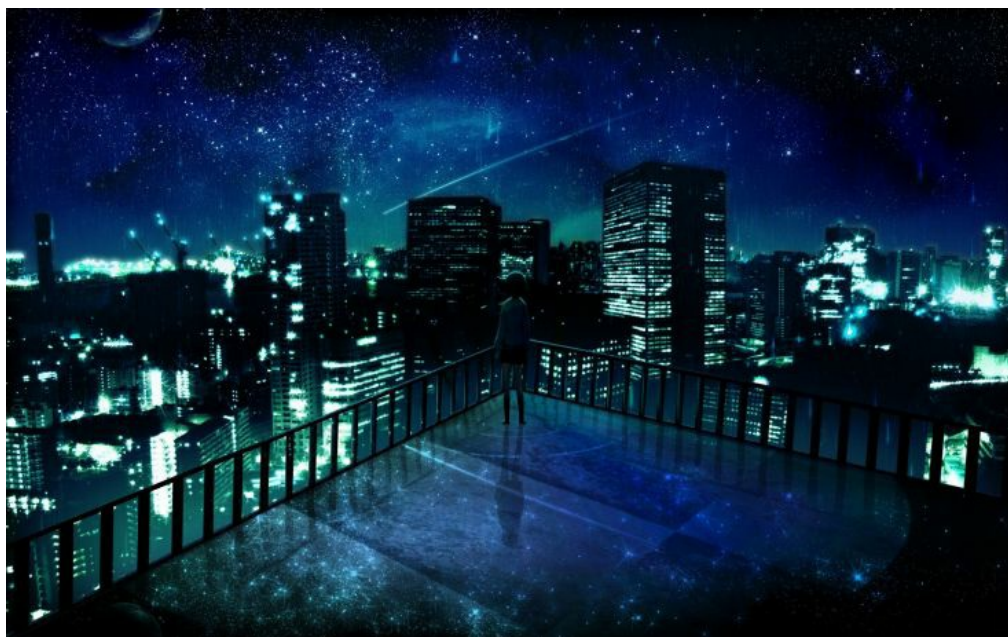
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Chapter 4.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 4.1

[April 18, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [35 Comments](#)



Courtship from a chemistry professor's perspective.....

Chapter 4.1 – Story in the City (1)

She was very quiet, listening to the slow, steady beat of her heart.

Zhousheng Chen smiled.

She unexpectedly heard, outside of their room, the sound of shoes stepping on the wooden floors. There were not many private rooms on this floor of the restaurant, and therefore, the number of people being served was limited. Throughout the entire meal, footsteps such as these had only been heard two or three times.

However, this last time, they came to a halt right outside their door.

A hand pushed open the door, and a little face poked out from behind it. It was

a young boy. “Big Brother.” There was a look of surprise on Zhousheng Chen’s face. When the door was opened completely, there was not only a little boy but also two young women, both wearing cheongsams and shawls, following after him. Shi Yi noticed that the lower abdomen of one of the girls was protruding slightly, and it was apparent she was pregnant.

She was taken aback by this girl’s age. Judging from the teenage girl baby fat that had not yet completely disappeared, she likely was not even twenty years old yet.

The unexpected visitors caused the quiet room to become livelier.

“Why have you come out as well?” he asked them.

They exchanged a look and then the little boy quickly rushed to explain, “The Cold Food Festival has made us have no appetite. If it’s not cold dishes, it’s more cold dishes, so we decided to come out together and feed ourselves a big, sumptuous meal.”

They were all very well-mannered. Besides greeting her when they first met, their gazes did not excessively land on her. When they saw the golden lock on her chest, though, they appeared rather shocked but then very quickly concealed their emotions.

Shi Yi moved to sit beside Zhousheng Chen, giving her spacious seat to the pregnant woman.

During the brief introductions, Shi Yi tried to commit the names to memory. One was his younger cousin-sister, Zhou Wenfang; the girl who was pregnant was his elder cousin-brother’s wife, Tang Xiaofu; and the boy who had entered the room first was called Zhousheng Ren.

She had not expected that there would be another boy with the surname Zhousheng. According to Zhousheng Chen, he was the firstborn son of the firstborn son, so therefore, in this generation, there should be no other person bearing the same surname as him.

Then, why was this boy also surnamed Zhousheng?

The word, “son” popped into her mind, and her eyes quickly swept over the two of them. It would seem that they should be about thirteen to fourteen years

apart in age. Zhousheng Chen seemed to see through her thoughts and rather amusedly informed her, "He is my younger brother."

When he said this, the little boy did not show any peculiar reaction.

The two women, though, noticeably quieted for a brief moment but very quickly started a conversation on another topic.

From what they were saying, it seemed this was the first time the girl named Tong Xiaofu had come to Zhenjiang.

She seemed as if she was very unaccustomed to the old manor, grumbling repeatedly that when she went to sleep at night, she would always be afraid that ghosts would appear. Zhou Wenfang said disapprovingly, "If I was you, I would use the fact that I was pregnant to just get out of that place."

"I've already used the fact that I am pregnant to not participate in offering sacrifices to the ancestors. If I didn't stay there, I would probably be reprimanded by the elders."

Zhou Wenfang exhaled lightly. "Good thing it's only once every four years. If I were to actually live there, I would honestly go crazy."

Zhousheng Chen listened for a while, but then his eyes shifted to the lake outside the window, seeming as if he was watching the rain, yet also like he was lost in his thoughts.

Shi Yi glanced at him, speculating what he might be thinking about.

Suddenly, he turned and looked straight at her.

Such direct eye contact. There was not even enough time for her to move her gaze away. Blinking, she smiled embarrassedly, "What are you thinking about?"

"The experimental results they sent over this morning were not very ideal," he replied simply. "I suspect a mistake must have been made in the experimental procedure." She responded with an "oh." She had asked again about a topic she did not understand.

Oh, Shi Yi, serves you right for this awkward silence.

With a warm smile, he carried on, "So I was thinking, I should conclude all the matters here as soon as possible and return to Xi'an, otherwise, I am worried all

the work that had been done earlier would be wasted.”

She nodded, recalling in her mind the image of him wearing his white laboratory coat.

Very clean and serious.

On the way back home, she asked if the little boy was truly his younger brother.

He shook his head. “Strictly speaking, Xiao Ren is my younger cousin-brother. He is my paternal uncle’s son.”

“Then why does he also have the surname Zhousheng?”

“When I was five years old, my father passed away and I was the only Zhousheng remaining,” he told her. “For the Zhousheng family estate and business, my uncle carried on the Zhousheng surname and hence, his son, Xiao Ren is surnamed Zhousheng as I am. However, the requirement was that he be given in adoption to my mother.”

She nodded her head. Such complicated relationships.

“My engagement can be considered the signifying of my coming of age. Uncle and Xiao Ren will then change their surname.”

Such complicated relationships.....

Shi Yi followed along with his explanations and formed an opinion on such a family.

“Your mother only has you, her one son?”

“I also have a younger brother and sister. They are twins.” The look in his eyes suddenly became more gentle. “But unfortunately, their temperaments are both rather peculiar, and they never return to the family home to participate in ancestor worship. When the chance arises in the future, you will see them.”

Zhousheng Chen accompanied her back to where she was staying. As the two of them stood at the doorway saying goodbye, she hesitated. She wanted to ask him what needed to be done next. She did not know, though, with his mother’s

obvious disapproval, how and to what extent their relationship would continue to develop.

The lighting glowed an amber color. There was no heat emitted, but it gave a nice sense of warmth.

She did not want to part yet, and he did not immediately leave.

In this moment, the two of them truly appeared as if they were a pair of lovers who had spent the entire day out on a date and now were reluctant to bid farewell to one another.

He asked her, "When are you parents planning on leaving Zhenjiang?"

"Probably the day after tomorrow."

He pondered for a moment. "If I arrange for the engagement ceremony to be in Shanghai one month from now, will that make them uncomfortable?"

"Shanghai?" she exclaimed. "Not in Zhenjiang?"

The instant the words slipped out, she regretted it.

She sounded like she really could not wait anymore.

He chuckled. "We don't have sufficient time. And also, this afternoon, you already heard my younger cousin-sister and cousin-sister-in-law mention that they only come once every four years for the ancestor worship ceremony. Therefore, there is no need to hold it here."

She answered with an "mm."

Still feeling somewhat uneasy, she tentatively asked, "Your mother's opinion really doesn't matter?"

"In this matter, there is only one woman's opinion that is worth accepting," he told her, his voice carrying a joking tone that was seldom heard. "That woman is you."

Such a comfortable, pleasant-feeling way to answer, and his tone was very confident as well.

"I gave this to you, and it represents my stance. No one else has the right to interfere." He stretched out his hand. With his finger, he gave a tap on the solid,

circular necklace made of pure gold that was on her chest and then followed its slender curve until he reached the gold lock, which he took into his hand. “Each person who bears the surname Zhousheng is fashioned one of these upon his birth. Inside of it, there is a piece of jade and on it is inscribed my birthday.”

His hand was right at her chest.

Shi Yi’s hands were behind her back, grasping onto each other, and her grip was actually rather strong from nervousness. She raised her head to speak but abruptly plunged into that pair of pitch black eyes that, although they were reflecting the light, seemed still so deep and fathomless.

She stared up at him.

He, too, gazed right at her.

Then, she heard him say, “Prior to the official betrothal, this piece is to be given to my fiancée. And you accepted it, so therefore, your legitimate status is established.”

Behind her, her two hands had tugged and twisted each other so much that they hurt.

“Do I need to wear it everyday?.....”

“No.” He could not help laughing. “You just need to accept it and put it away.”

When he finished saying this, he let go of the golden lock.

She breathed out in relief.

He had actually discerned her nervousness from the beginning and amusedly, he said, “Good night.”

“Good night.”

She turned and opened the door.

Twisting her head back, she saw that he had already walked into the elevator lobby. His figure was very tall.

As a “ding” echoed out lightly, he cast a glance over in her direction and then, with a slight nod of his head, stepped into the elevator.

Afterwards, when her mother asked her about the occasion of meeting his parents, Shi Yi merely brushed over the topic. Instead, remembering what he had said to her, she sincerely consulted her parents on their opinion and whether they would mind that the engagement be held a month later in Shanghai.

This was a very sudden decision, but thankfully, the impression he had left with her parents was very good.

Neither proud nor frivolous, but courteous and respectful.

Just from these virtues, he had received high scores from the older generation.

The morning they left Zhenjiang, Zhousheng Chen had come to see them off. He arranged a time with Shi Yi for them to try some formal attire, and then, he personally handed to her parents a booklet that introduced in detail the location of the engagement ceremony as well another four alternate locations.

After Shi Yi was seated in the car, he even leaned over and lowered his head to say goodbye to her.

“Once you are on the expressway, you need to fasten your seatbelt,” he instructed her.

She quickly pulled the seatbelt strap and dutifully buckled it.

On the journey home, her mother sat beside her and flipped through that booklet. To their surprise, she discovered it had all been done by hand and the characters were written in very proper regular script^[1]. She sighed to her father, “That boy, he is so attentive.”

“Much more than just attentive,” her father laughed. “This boy has done all the customs and etiquette to a ‘T’ without even a bit of impatience or arrogance, like a person who does scientific research.”

A smile could be seen at the corner of Mother’s lips as she looked over at Shi Yi. “Usually, when the two of you are together, do you find it boring?”

Shi Yi considered briefly. “No.”

“You don’t?” Her mother was amused. “Everyday, three calls come in

promptly: seven o'clock in the morning, eleven o'clock midday, and ten thirty at night. Every time, the call won't be more than three minutes long. Is that a bit too rigid?"

"Nope."

It was so good this way. Every time, when it was nearly their set time, she would stay away from everything and all matters to wait for his telephone call.

The subjects of their conversations were also very simple.

She had never thought that she could have regular contact with him like this.

There was no uncomfortable feeling whatsoever, and in fact, she took pleasure in those calls.

Zhousheng Chen truly was doing as he had said, regarding their relationship as a research direction, and was extremely patient in performing every necessary step. No matter how busy he might be, he would still ensure that there was three phone calls each day for them to keep in touch. Each morning, he would have someone deliver different flowers.

He was physically in Zhenjiang, yet it seemed like he was in Shanghai.

Because he was aware of her unique working hours, every time she needed to stay at the recording studio and work late into the hours of the night, he would always have a late night meal delivered to her promptly at eleven o'clock. In addition, he would thoughtfully prepare a portion for everyone else who was there at the workplace, too.

In the end, even the recording engineers who had worked with Shi Yi for five or six years started to grow curious, and as they gobbled their steaming hot late night meal, they would ask Shi Yi whether she had a boyfriend or was it just a suitor.

Shi Yi answered that it was her boyfriend and then did not offer any further explanation.

One night, her manager, Mei Lin came to check on the work and also chanced upon the late night snack that had been "sent with love." Rather surprised, she

surveyed the smile of happiness in Shi Yi's eyes and felt as if a lifetime had passed between her and this girl. In the dozen or so days that she had not seen her, how did she suddenly get a doting boyfriend who never showed his face?

Mei Lin had an impatient temperament, and under all forms of threats and bribes, Shi Yi finally revealed that he was a chemistry professor.

"A scientist?" Mei Lin's views on life and values were completely overturned. "You would actually like some scientist who spends all day in a lab?"

Laughing, Shi Yi held her cup of Hong Kong-style milk tea in her hand. "He has a high IQ, ah. I like people who are very intelligent."

With a shake of her head, Mei Lin laughed somewhat disbelievingly.

She continued in a soft voice, "And, we are going to be engaged very soon."

Mei Lin was dumbfounded for a full five or six seconds before she patted her on the wrist and exhaled a long breath. "Good thing you're just getting engaged or else I think I really would have died from shock. Engagement is a tactic that those rich playboys like to play all the time. You need to be very careful that you do not take it too seriously."

Shi Yi ignored her mocking and instead, asked her in a serious tone, "What do you think? If someone does not lack anything, what could you give him as a gift? I'm talking about an engagement gift."

"Does not lack anything?" Mei Lin immediately attached her attention onto the most important point.

"He is a person who seems like he is not too interested in anything at all." Shi Yi consciously avoided what was a sensitive topic.

"A professor in chemistry who is not interested in anything....." Mei Lin was completely hopeless on this. "I know absolutely nothing about chemistry. As far as I'm concerned, your boyfriend is not all that different to me from an alien."

"Forget it, I won't ask you."

"Alright, alright. And I won't ask you anymore either. You're not an artiste that needs to show her face anyway, so I don't need to worry about you getting photographed by the paparazzi." Mei Lin grinned, "Here's some good news for

you. You've been nominated for an award.....”

She glanced at her watch. Another minute and then he would be calling.

So long as it was a workday, the nighttime phone call would be changed to 11:30.

“Let me make a phone call.” She interrupted Mei Lin’s words, shoved her back inside from the balcony, closed the glass door behind her, and pulled out her mobile phone.

He had gotten a mobile phone specifically for her sake, and in his contacts address book, there was only her name.

If she thought about it, was this not extremely romantic as well?

Beneath the balcony of the studio was a pedestrian street. During this changing of seasons from spring to summer, the Chinese parasol trees were already starting to look lush, with large, green leaves bursting forth, carrying with them a fresh scent that filled the air.

The time jumped from 11:29 to 11:30.

Suddenly, her caller ID lit up her screen. The three characters, “Zhousheng Chen” seemed especially prominent against the dark of the night.

[1]小楷 “xiao kai.” 楷书 “regular script” or “standard script” is a script style in the writing of Chinese characters. Nowadays, it is the most widely-recognized script style – legible, balanced, and proper, where all the strokes are distinct from one another. (I personally like to think of it as akin to “printing” in the writing of English words, as opposed to different forms of “cursive writing.”). Zhousheng Chen used小楷 small regular script, which means the characters are written less than 2 cm in width or length.

Additional Comments:

I know lots of you want to know when Zhousheng Chen truly falls for Shi Yi, but sometimes, love is a process. While ZSC may seem unromantic, he has chosen Shi Yi, and to him, that means he will put effort into this relationship, even if what he does is formulaic. But I agree with Shi Yi. Coming from Zhousheng Chen, his thoughtfulness and effort and the fact that she is the only person who gets this special treatment from him is romantic in and of itself.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
11 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 4.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 4.2

[April 22, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [42 Comments](#)



You have to give him credit for trying to be romantic.

Chapter 4.2 – Story in the City (2)

His voice was very smooth and steady.

He asked her what time she had started work, when she would finish work for the day, and whether the late-night snack had suited her appetite. Shi Yi answered each one of his questions, and then they suddenly both fell silent. She could not help laughing and she asked him, “Is it a must that you ask me these

questions everyday?”

Zhousheng Chen also laughed, at a loss for words for a brief moment.

“From your voice, you sound really tired? Or are you sick?”

“I caught a cold last night.”

“Have you taken medication for it?”

“Not yet.”

“Then let’s not talk anymore.” Shi Yi felt her heart twinge a tad. “Hurry and go take some medicine.”

“Now?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t have any medication on hand.”

In a slightly reproachful tone, she asked, “You don’t have medication always ready at home?”

What she really wanted to say was, “Gosh, my Eldest Young Master, don’t tell me you don’t even know that you should take medicine when you are sick, huh?”

All of a sudden, a fire engine drove by, and Shi Yi instinctively lifted her head to look. But then, she discovered that from within her phone, she could hear the same sound, which started strong and gradually grew weaker until it was completely quiet. She seemed to realize something and immediately scanned around downstairs with her eyes. Through the gaps between the branches and leaves of the parasol trees, she saw a car at the corner of the street and someone standing beside it.

Ten storeys. Too high. There were too many things obstructing the view, and she could not see clearly.

“You’re downstairs?”

Zhousheng Chen answered with an “mm” that carried a hint of congestion in it.

She felt touched for one moment, then the next moment, she wanted to laugh at how funny it was.

This person's unexpected arrival should have been such an incredibly romantic gesture but was spoiled because of a random, unforeseen fire truck. And then, he very calmly admitted to it without any other unnecessary words. She could not let him wait any longer. Hearing his stuffy, nasal tone when he spoke, she felt as if catching a cold had become an extremely serious issue, and she hurriedly hung up the phone. She returned inside to the studio, and after she swiftly handed off her work, she picked up her purse and dashed to the elevator. Fortunately, the recording portion was completed already, and they were just doing the final mixing, otherwise, this would definitely ruin her reputation of being conscientious and responsible.

Still, her manager and the recording engineer were stunned.

Seeing her like this, her face flushed and so anxious that she was not willing to say anything, if they did not know better, they would have thought that her house was on fire.

As the elevator doors closed, Mei Lin finally remembered that she had not yet talked to her about the award nomination.

And what Mei Lin found amusing and annoying at the same time was, this girl truly did not care in the least about getting an award.

The elevator descended rapidly. She was still gasping lightly from her sprinting just a moment ago.

The descent speed was too swift, and it caused her heart to feel vaguely uncomfortable.

She was unsure whether it was because she was nervous or because of the feeling of weightlessness.

When the elevator doors slid open, she quickly stepped out with a large stride and nearly crashed straight into someone. A pair of hands reached out and steadied her. "Don't run. I'm right here." It was too abrupt an appearance. Shi Yi was somewhat in a daze as she stared at Zhousheng Chen, who was right before her.

He explained his unexpected presence there. "I inferred that you would run

down and was worried that you would be too anxious and inattentive when you crossed the road, so I came over here first to meet you.”

She was still out of breath.

Twenty-one days. They had not seen each other for a total of twenty-one days.

In that period, she had tried on many outfits and jewelry he had sent over, had received flowers from him, and even her parents had received gifts from him on a regular basis, but she had not seen him in person.

She had probingly tried to ask, but his answer to her had been, “I do not want to lie to you about what I have been doing lately. Please do not ask.”

His tone was very solemn and she surmised that he must have had some very important matters.

To Shi Yi, the name “Zhousheng Chen” would forever be worth trusting.

“Are you still going to be leaving tonight?” she blurted.

The corner of Zhousheng Chen’s lips seemed to move slightly, as if he was smiling. “Where would I be going to?”

“What I mean is,” she said, pondering briefly what she wanted to say, “you’re staying in Shanghai tonight?”

He nodded.

Her good mood from hearing this was plainly obvious.

“Let’s take you back to your home first.”

With a nod, she answered, “Mm.”

He let go of her, and they walked alongside each other.

Shi Yi was about to get into his vehicle when her mobile phone started vibrating furiously. It was Mei Lin. Speaking like she was doing a despicable deed, she deliberately lowered her voice and said, “I see you and also your chemistry professor. But it’s ten storeys up. No matter how I look, all I can tell is that he’s a lot taller than you.....”

Shi Yi cut her off. “Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Good night.”

She quickly hung up.

Zhousheng Chen opened one of the back doors of the car for her. “You still have work to do so late at night?”

She smiled, “No.” When she was seated inside, she greeted the man in the front seat who was smiling kindly. “Uncle Lin[\[1\]](#).”

“Greetings to you, Miss Shi Yi.”

She had seen his driver several times now, and she finally knew that this middle-aged man, whose dress was exquisite and who was very strict and meticulous in his work, was also surnamed Zhou. Zhousheng Chen explained to her in simple terms, most of the more senior household servants had the surname Zhou and more or less were somehow distantly related to the family. However, to distinguish them from the family members who were directly related, they were addressed by the last character in their given name.

The more she learned, the more she sighed over how traditional his family was.

A powerful, influential family for generations, yet also a family of literary repute.

It was hard to imagine that a child brought up in such a family would end up dedicating his life to modern science and research. Shi Yi recalled that he had mentioned a younger brother and sister pair who were twins, and she started to become rather curious about what they were like.

More than twenty days had passed, and it was nearly May. Nights in the city were no longer frigid-cold, and the weather was very comfortable.

He opened a window for her, but she shook her head and rolled it back up again.

Perhaps because Uncle Lin was present, or perhaps because they had not seen each other in a long while, there seemed to be an awkward unfamiliarity between the two of them, and at the same time, Shi Yi even felt a little uncomfortable chatting with him in the presence of a third person. The rapport they had developed from the three phone calls a day had completely dissipated.

It was to the point that, as he sat there beside her, the slightest movement of his arm would be infinitely magnified.

Only when Zhousheng Chen had accompanied her to her front door and there was no other person did Shi Yi tentatively ask, “Want to come in and sit for a while?”

“Would it be too late?”

“I want to steep a cup of herbal medicine for you that will dispel coldness[2] from your body.” She spoke softly, but in the empty stairwell, her voice could still be clearly heard. “It will take about twenty minutes, at most half an hour.”

Zhousheng Chen gave her a smile. “I simply do not have a good handle on what would be appropriate because I have never been in a girl’s home alone before.”

Very honest, so honest it made you want to laugh.

Shi Yi teased him in a quiet voice, “Didn’t you say you like embroidery based on Wu songs? How come you’re so.....”

“So boring?” He knew where she was going with her words.

“A little bit.” Shi Yi remembered the theory he had developed from his scientific and experiment-based style of thinking. “I want to ask a question.”

“Ask then.”

“You said, we are... um... a research direction to you.” She gazed at him. “What if our research direction is wrong? What do we do?”

The smile on Zhousheng Chen’s lips grew stronger. “I remember that you were in the Chinese Language Faculty in school? Majored purely in Chinese Language and Literature?”

She nodded, not comprehending the reason for his question.

“So, you have made a conceptual error.”

Shi Yi was even more bewildered. “What sort of conceptual error?”

“A research direction is never right nor wrong in itself.”

Shi Yi nodded again, indicating that he continue with what he was saying.

“Mistakes only occur in the experimental method.”

“Then..... what if the experimental method is wrong?”

“If the method is wrong, then one will change to use a different method. However, the research direction does not change.”

It sounded very convincing.

But the metaphor in this dialogue was actually referring to their relationship.

They were together, and that was a fact that would not change. If anything went wrong, then they would change how they approached one another in their relationship.

She understood the meaning of what he was saying.

Shi Yi had always believed that the power of the written language was most capable of beguiling minds, but now, in this moment, she saw in Zhousheng Chen’s smiling eyes a method that was even more stirring. She gave a little laugh. “Science and technology are not only a principle productive force[\[3\]](#), they are also the best form... of language.”

She turned the key and, at last, opened her door.

Because of her work hours, she had moved out from her parents’ home and had been living alone now for three or four years. Besides a few friends, never before had any other people that were not family come to her home before, let alone a man. Everywhere in the room were evidences that a girl lived in this place alone. Zhousheng Chen was seated on the sofa, looking straight ahead and as much as possible, not allowing his gaze to stray sideways.

His sickness made him feel fatigued, and as a result, he sat there, his back against the sofa, in a posture that appeared slightly more casual. He rested his arm on the side, and his fingers brushed against a fluffy, oblong throw pillow. Hmm, that tactile sensation was very..... different.

Shi Yi had brewed a package of Chinese herbal medicine for him that dispelled cold, and she now brought it over to him.

He took it from her and tried it. It was still hot.

“The elderly have a saying, ‘spring to cover up, autumn to feel the cold.’” She pulled over an even fuzzier short seat that looked something similar to a small stool and sat down on it in front of him. “Do not be so rushed to wear lighter clothes in the spring. These last ten days, the weather has been going up and down quite drastically, and it is very easy to catch a cold.”

Her expression was serious when she spoke.

Zhousheng Chen was not wearing very much, only a thin button-up shirt and trousers.

It was so late at night, yet his shirt sleeves were still rolled up to his elbows. He was not behaving at all like he was sick.

He lowered his head and took a small sip of the herbal brew. “It is merely a cold. Based on scientific law, regardless of whether medication is taken for it, it will be better in seven days.”

“This particular package of Chinese herbs is to dispel cold.” Shi Yi pointed at him, “If your illness is a result of an invasion of coldness, by tomorrow, it should show improvement.”

He raised his eyebrows. “It is that effective?”

“Of course.”

Seeing his still dubious look, Shi Yi could not help laughing. “Are you thinking that I was just trying to find an excuse for you to come in?”

“My words were not a rejection of any sort.” Zhousheng Chen’s voice was slightly hoarse from being sick, but that actually seemed to make it sound nicer. “They were out of prudence. Regarding my request to become engaged, it was already inappropriate how I had approached it, and as a result, I want to take things slower as we get to know one another.”

She had not expected he would provide such a solemn answer.

She was somewhat at a loss for words.

He, however, unexpectedly chuckled, “Do you want to hear something that’s true?”

Shi Yi’s curiosity was piqued, and she nodded.

“I actually really wanted to come in.”

She stared at him with a look of astonishment, but he had already lowered his head and continued to drink that herbal decoction that was scalding to the hands and mouth.

When he finally left, it really was almost half an hour later. Shi Yi discovered that the longer she associated with him, the more punctual she was becoming. Wearing her slippers, she accompanied him out to the elevator lobby. Zhousheng Chen’s left hand was in his pant pocket while his other hand pressed the elevator button. Right as the elevator doors opened, he suddenly remembered something and placed the back of his hand against the door to keep it open. He looked at her. “I came back this time because you were nominated for an award.”

Shi Yi was taken aback. Vaguely, she recalled that Mei Lin had mentioned this.

“So, you’re here specifically to watch the awards ceremony?”

“Mostly.” He pulled his left hand back out and used it to pull the two sides of her coat, which she had thrown over her shoulders, closed for her. “The remainder of the time will be used to prepare for the engagement ceremony.”

A sudden action of intimacy, yet he did it so naturally.

Her mind was still in a daze over this betrothal that was close at hand when his hand released their hold.

And then, he gently patted her on her arm. “Hurry back in.”

[1] 林叔 “Lin Shu.” “Shu” means uncle, and while the man is Zhousheng Chen’s chauffeur, it is still a polite and respectful way to address him because he is clearly from an older generation.

[2] In traditional Chinese medicine, there are six external “evils” (also called pernicious influences) that can penetrate into the body and result in illness: wind, cold, damp, heat (also called fire), summer heat, and dryness. When Shi Yi speaks about “cold,” she is not talking about the common cold directly, but

rather, from a traditional Chinese medicine sense, the cold evil that has invaded his body to produce these symptoms of the common cold or flu. Therefore, this treatment is also about dispelling this cold evil/influence out of the body.

[3] Shi Yi is referring to [Marx's theory](#), I believe. To be honest, I've been far removed from social studies for a long time now, so I'm open to correction.

Additional Comments:

While replying to everyone's comments, I happily noticed that people were starting to appreciate the little details of this relationship. You probably keep seeing me write that this is a slowly developed romance. This is actually my favourite type of love story. The idiom, 细水长流, literally meaning "thin streams of water will flow for a long time" is often used to describe this type of love. Hoju's views on that: It's not a raging waterfall or rapids that overcome and engulf you, like the passionate type of love that is often featured in romance stories and hits us hard, like a waterfall, but love that is demonstrated in small details and over time, grows deeper and deeper, like a thin stream of water that flows gently over a rock, slowly, over time, cutting a pathway into it without anyone even noticing. A flash flood may come quickly and bowl you over, but that thin stream of water is slow and steady but never lets up until one day, you see it has cut right into the heart of the stone.

Bah, I know this isn't completely related to today's post. It's more how I would summarize the love story of the entire novel, but all your comments from last day inspired that thought and I needed to get that off my chest now. You can just keep that at the back of your mind while you read the rest of the story because I could not wait another half a year, when the novel will be done, to say it. :p

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

12 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 4.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 4.3

[April 25, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [25 Comments](#)



Most of you who followed along with *Really, Really* will know this, but for any newer readers, I have a regular posting schedule for *Beautiful Bones*. Updates are posted every Tuesday and Friday night, N. American time (or Wednesday and Saturday days for anyone else across an ocean). I try to post at similar times every update, with a few hours leeway, so you know when to expect the posting and don't need to keep checking. Hehe, I am a little similar to Zhousheng Chen in this manner.

Zhousheng Chen is always gentlemanly but never a pushover.♥ But the poor guy just can't seem to get his surprises right. Haha.

Chapter 4.3 – Story in the City (3)

By the time he left Shi Yi's home, it was already 12:45 a.m.

He looked up at her apartment. It was on the twelfth floor. From the position of the warm, orangey-yellow glow of what was likely a heat lamp, she should be in the bathroom showering. The acidic, bitter taste of the herbal medicine was still on the tip of his tongue. Earlier on, when she had brought it over to him, he had actually very much wanted to tell her that, because he had drank too many of this type of Chinese herbal medicine when he was a teenager, he had long ago become averse to the smell.

But it was very difficult to turn her down, was it not?

Just like in Guangzhou's Baiyun Airport, she had chased after him in her bare feet, asking him to stay behind and wait for her. That, too, had been very difficult to refuse.

This girl's eyes were too pure. She was like someone who had stepped out of an ink-and-wash painting.

He had once thought that he was being deceived.

However, when he held the more than 200-pages of information on her, he could not find the slightest point for suspicion.

Zhousheng Chen stood in one place for some time until he saw the light of the heat lamp turn off.

Then subsequently, it was the bedroom light that illuminated.

He glanced down at his watch. Twenty-five minutes. Mm, so that was the duration required for her showering habits.

"Eldest Young Master." Uncle Lin walked over to him. "It is about time now."

Uncle Lin's car was parked by the roadside. Far away, there were four or five other vehicles that were also stopped. He nodded, turned around, and without looking back again, sat down in the car. In the beginning, those four or five vehicles only followed from a distance. They drove at a high speed. From Shanghai to the old manor in Zhenjiang, it took less than three hours. The old

manor was brightly lit and bustling, not at all seeming like it was four o'clock in the morning.

As he stepped out of the car, he felt a little chilly, so he rolled down his sleeves and buttoned them up.

All of a sudden, he remembered Shi Yi's words.

He said to Uncle Lin, "'Spring to cover up, autumn to feel the cold.' Uncle Lin, have you heard this saying before?"

"A saying often mentioned by common folk. Was Miss Shi Yi the one who told Eldest Young Master, you about it?"

Zhousheng Chen did not comment.

The trip from Zhenjiang to Shanghai could not be considered a long and arduous journey, but it had still consumed some energy, especially since he was still ill. However, there was no way around it. Right now, if he was to depend on the rules of an old, traditional family to smoothly take over all matters, big and small, in the Zhousheng family, then he needed to follow the old conventions and act in accordance with the rules. For example, the six o'clock morning meal was a rule, and it was required to be in Zhenjiang.

However, because he had the habit of rising early, it was changed to five o'clock.

He did not think there was much significance in this, but in other people's eyes, this was a centuries-old rule forcibly being changed. On the surface, it was merely the hour at which the morning meal was to be partaken, but in other people's hearts, they were not thinking about just the simple matter of having a meal.

This man, who at the age of fourteen had stepped onto the pathway of scientific research and had always been indifferent to the matters in the family, was using a wordless method to declare his status and position.

From his pant pocket, he pulled out a gray, checkered handkerchief and lightly pressed it against his mouth and nose to avoid the pollen scent that was coming from within the courtyard as he silently proceeded inside. There were continually people bowing and hailing him, "Eldest Young Master."

As he strode into the main hall, most of the people that were to be seated at the thirteen tables were present already.

He did not recognize all of them but nodded to each one in a form of greeting.

He approached the head table and sat down. Beside him, there was only Zhousheng Heng and Xiao Ren. His mother as well as the women who had more seniority in the family were sitting at the adjacent table. Her hair was still pulled up in a meticulous bun and emphasized her elegant, long, and narrow eyes^[1].

It was a very quiet morning meal. When their bowls and chopsticks were set down, the sky was just beginning to hazily light up.

He wanted to leave, but his mother insisted that he stay behind. However, when it was only himself, his uncle, Xiao Ren, and his mother left, the atmosphere seemed even icier than before.

After his birth mother had died in a mishap, Zhousheng Ren had not liked talking anymore. He actually was very close with Zhousheng Chen, and now, he picked up a book, sat down in a chair next to him, and started reading. When he reached a spot he did not understand, he took a pen and underlined it, then handed it over to him. Zhousheng Chen smiled, took it from him, and scribbled down some formulas.

“Did you sleep well last night?” Uncle solicitously inquired about his wellbeing.

He slid the book back to Xiao Ren. “Last night I was in Shanghai. I still have not had time to sleep.”

Uncle was already starting to heartily discuss with him the various matters within the family.

In his generation in the Zhousheng family, not only were those with the Zhousheng surname declining to enter politics, even those who were in the direct line of descent were beginning to be prohibited from taking part in those roles. Rather than saying that this was so they would appear unassuming and average, it would be better to say it was to seclude themselves from the world. Furthermore, the views of those in his grandfather’s generation were old-fashioned, and they always held the belief that merchants and businessmen were of a lower status. As a result, very few in the family entered into business.

The family had more than two hundred years of accumulated history. Its roots were deep and the family was flourishing, having experienced several cycles where the country had opened its doors to outsiders and then subsequently closed them again. In these hundred years, each time a newly developing industry or business started to show its presence, they would willingly lend some assistance but afterward, would never get involved in the business matters, acting only in the most basic of roles as a shareholder.

Gradually, the family had accumulated its wealth of today. "To seek stability, not change." That was the ancestral instruction.

Unfortunately, his return this time was to bring about change that would completely overturn things.

"Do you remember the Nan family?" Uncle smiled lightly. "Several years back, on that gambling ship, they worked in cooperation with your mother. They have signed a joint venture agreement with the local government in Iran and now have access to the local automobile market. Nan Huai was very generous, and the returns he gave were bounteous. Your mother and I have had discussions, and we have decided to give it all to your fiancée. Also, if possible, let her shadow your mother for three years to learn how to manage the household."

"Shi Yi?" He pondered briefly. "She does not need to."

His mother looked at him indifferently. "When she marries into the family, she will have to start to learn."

"She is not suitable for it." He did not give them any face.

"You, too, are not suitable, but you must take over anyway," his mother said softly, "Since you have chosen her, then she must be suitable. If you have already found that she is not suitable, then it is not too late to replace her with one who is submissive and obedient."

"Wanniang." Uncle shook his head, trying to defuse their conflict. "I have seen the drawn portrait of that girl. She looks very docile. Perhaps compared to those highbred young ladies who were brought up since childhood to specifically know how to run a household, she might even be better."

Mother smiled coolly.

Zhousheng Chen also did not speak.

Mother smiled, “Her occupation is all about prancing and flaunting to please the masses. Even if she gets any sort of repute, it is because someone has chosen to back her. I don’t see what good she could possibly have.”

“She is very suitable for me.”

“Your reason is a frail one.”

He did not continue arguing.

Xiao Ren’s head was lowered as he set-up and arranged the problem with the formulas Zhousheng Chen had given him. Stumbling through, he at last managed to solve the problem. He called a servant to change out the refreshments to be “Qi Fan Gao[2]” [Seven Returns Cake] and the tea from “Shen Quan Xiao Tuan” [Divine Spring Water, Small Bundles] tea to “En Shi Yu Lu” [Mercy Granted as Jade Dew] tea[3]. Youngest Young Master was known for his eccentric temperament. When he was in a good mood, everything was good to him, but when he was not in a good mood, he made things very difficult for the servants.

Xiao Ren had ordered everything to be changed, and of course the three adults there did not prevent him from doing so.

Very soon, someone had come over and noiselessly replaced everyone’s teas and refreshments.

With outsiders present, Zhousheng Chen’s mother quiet and composed bearing resumed once again.

While he was thinking of an excuse to take his leave, Xiao Ren quickly pushed his book over toward him again. Thinking it was another problem or something of that sort to solve, his eyes scanned over it, and then, he could not help smiling. He bent his finger and rapped the boy lightly on the forehead with his knuckle. Inside the book, some words were written with a flourish in deft, cursive script:

Your Shi Yi really likes you, even I can see that...

Film festival awards ceremony were something she would always avoid if

possible. She would even decline being present as a spectator, much less walking the red carpet. Several years ago, Mei Lin had made some efforts to try to promote her. Unfortunately, she was the prime example of being a hopeless case. As a result, she was the last one to be notified, even for her own nomination, for they were all certain that she would decline to attend.

This time however, completely contrary to Mei Lin's expectations, she promptly agreed to go.

To Shi Yi, the reason was very simple: because of Zhousheng Chen's one sentence.

She was even starting to eagerly anticipate, on that day, sitting side by side with him in a corner, watching the celebration on the stage, or him sitting down below and watching her name being listed as one of the nominees or even as winning the award.

Some of the betrothal formal gowns Zhousheng Chen had sent over were actually not suitable for an engagement ceremony but were very suitable for attending a film festival.

As she stared at her wardrobe, she even started to wonder, had he known about this very early on and that was why he had given her those particular ones?

Even just this thought was enough to put her in a good mood.

She wavered back and forth over which to wear, hesitant on making a decision, until she finally ended up sitting on the floor in her closet. A continuous stream of memories started flooding over her. She remembered herself of the past and what she had worn for their first arranged time together — a wide-sleeved cross-collar garment in a pale blue color, like the moon^[4], with a light yellow sash resting on her arms. And him? She could not remember. What would cause her to forget something so important?



I imagine Shi Yi in her previous life, in a pale, “moon blue” garment to be like this

She leaned backward so that she was lying amongst several of the gowns. Something seemed like it was about to surface, to come to light, but she was not quite able to put her finger on it.

Shi Yi, you’re worrying yourself over imaginary troubles again.

She chuckled and rubbed her face against the hem of the dresses. The way things were right now was wonderful already. So wonderful it could not possibly get any better.

She specifically requested Mei Lin to save two seats for her.

Unfortunately, Zhousheng Chen suddenly called her and said that he would be a little late, so she could only give him Mei Lin’s phone number, telling him that if he arrived and it was not convenient for her to answer the phone, someone else would bring him in.

After confirming that he had indeed taken down the number correctly, she hung up the phone and sprawled out in her own seat, watching all sorts of people coming and going, exchanging greetings, flattering one another, shaking hands, and embracing.

“What are you smiling about? I seldom see you this happy.”

Mei Lin had finished settling down all her signed artistes and now finally remembered this beautiful maiden who she had left on her own to “be independent.”

She smiled and pointed at the sign on her seat: “Shi Yi.”

Mei Lin nodded. “You’re not in the wrong spot. This is your seat.”

Her finger shifted and pointed at the seat adjacent to hers that had no sign. “Shi Yi’s ‘someone’.”

Mei Lin could not help laughing. Patting her on the face, she said, “Just look at you. Are you ridiculously happy?”

Her lips came together in a smile. Leaning sideways so that one side of her face was resting on the seatback in front of her, she gave an “mm” in reply.

“What kind of appeal can someone who does science and research have?” Mei Lin was truly very curious about that “alien.” “What if, one day, you guys have a fight? Will he, in a moment of fury, cause you vanish without a trace off the face of the earth? You know, like using something like strong sulphuric acid or whatnot.”

Shi Yi shot an amused glance at her. “So uncultured you are. All you know is to use sulphuric acid.”

“Oh, and you know just so much.”

“A little bit more than you.”

“Like what?”

“H₂SO₄.”

Mei Lin gaped at her. “What’s that? Bone dissolving acid[\[5\]](#)?”

“Sulphuric acid.” She gazed smugly at Mei Lin. “When you change the way you say it, doesn’t it make you sound like you are very learned?”

“Uh-huh.” Mei-Lin was floored. “I think it was middle school that I learned that. How did I manage to forget?” She searched through her mind trying to recall chemical formulas before suddenly realizing that she was being very negligent of her current duties by sitting here and chatting about chemistry with

Shi Yi. And the beautiful maiden wearing a vintage-style, pale blue gown, like the color of the moon's glow, was also very absorbed in the conversation.

"Okay, we're going to make an agreement now. I'm not going to the group celebration banquet tonight. I'm going to go with just you and your chemistry professor to have a late-night snack." Mei Lin was being tortured by her own curiosity and so, invited herself. "I must see what he looks like."

"Alright." Shi Yi thought for a moment and added, "That is, if he can get here in time."

"Such an important event, and he won't make it?"

"Can't say for sure." Shi Yi was also feeling somewhat apprehensive. "He's been very busy lately."

If Zhousheng Chen really did not show up, she would certainly be disappointed, but would she be angry? She conjured up the situation in her mind and discovered that she simply could not ever be angry with him. Still, she truly had not expected that, as awards were handed out one after another, her hypothetical situation would slowly become reality. He really was not coming.

Shi Yi was rather preoccupied the whole time. Even as the guest presenters announced her name and she stood up from her seat, she was still somewhat lost in her own thoughts.

This was the first time she had ever been present in person to receive an award. From the back aisles, she walked, step by step, up to the front, passing through the audience that was giving its incessant applause.

There was also the guest presenters' joking banter and pleasantries.

Awards for voice actors were very limited. There were a lot of people who knew her name but very few who had ever seen her face before. Shi Yi had done the dubbing for film or television roles of many of the extremely popular actresses who were sitting in the audience below. Once she stepped up onstage, the vast majority of people were astounded that this unfamiliar face actually corresponded with that familiar name.

She smiled modestly, intending on leaving the event immediately after she received the award.

But as her eyes slid over the first row of the audience, her gaze froze in surprise.

The filled seats of people in glamorous attire all seemed to fade away.

The only thing that remained was that pair of dark eyes that was looking at her, carrying a hint of weariness in them but also a faint smile.

The people sitting in that row were all industry veterans, the currently most popular actors and actresses, or big investors. Zhousheng Chen was sitting there calmly in the outermost seat on the right, dressed understatedly in a silver-gray suit jacket and white trousers.

This particular seat was somewhat remote and would not be captured by live footage cameras.

And because he did not want to be disturbed, he had deliberately left the seat beside himself vacant.

Alas, he did not understand the way this place worked. It was not one of those international science conferences he had attended before. Sitting there like that, in that type of seat, was clearly a high-profile way of appearing. Those people who had sat with him the entire night in the first row were all speculating who this man was and whom he had come for.

No one knew the answers.

No one besides the one onstage – her – who was seemingly unable to speak due to anxiousness from receiving an award.

[1] 凤眼 “feng yan.” Literally, this means “phoenix’s eyes.” It describes eyes that are elongated, almond shaped, and curve slightly upwards. In general, this shape is thought to be beautiful.

[2] 七返糕 “Qi Fan Gao.” A “gao” is usually a cake-like food (not necessarily sweet) of some sort. “Qi Fan Gao” has roots dating back more than a thousand years to the Sui/Tang era. It was originally a food important in Taoist practices

for maintaining good health. It is also mentioned in history books as a set cold dish in a feast that would be thrown when a new official took office or an official was promoted. However, what this dish actually was has been lost in time, and no one really understands what it was anymore. This is not a dish that any random person in China would know about nowadays. The fact that Xiao Ren would specify that he wants this dish shows how refined and picky his taste is, and that he does not have a commoner's taste buds.

[3] 神泉小团 “Shen Quan Xiao Tuan” [Divine Spring Water, Small Bundle] is a tea produced in the Dongchuan district of Yunnan China, and is listed in the Tang dynasty teas as one of the high quality teas. 恩施玉露 “En Shi Yu Lu” [Mercy Granted as Jade Dew] is one of the highest-grade green teas, recognized by some as one of the top ten teas of China. It was already well-known in the Tang dynasty and then became even more famous because of Qing dynasty Emperor Qianlong's love for it. Again, Xiao Ren's expensive taste shows through.

[4] 月青色 “yue qing se.” An ancient color description. Literally, it means “moon ‘qing’ color.” The color, “qing” in the Chinese language is a very interesting color. It is usually used to describe colors on the blue-green colour spectrum, but can also include purples and even black. Grass can be “qing,” the ocean can be “qing,” a snake can be “qing,” a grouchy expression can be “qing.” I searched long on Chinese sites for a description of what this “moon ‘qing’ color” might be, but to no avail and even saw the same question posted on some forums. So, I am hazarding my best guess and thinking that it is like the glow of the moon, that sometimes carries a very pale, blue hue. (I, however, can be completely wrong because I discovered another ancient color description, 雪青色 “snow ‘qing’ color” is actually a type of violet color. Who knows where that one came from?)

[5] 化骨水 “hua gu shui.” Literally, “bone dissolving water.” This is a name for hydrofluoric acid, which is a highly corrosive acid. When inside the human body, it reacts with calcium and causes organ failure. Initially, symptoms appear minor until the acid reacts with bone calcium, when it can lead to serious organ damage or death, hence its name, “bone dissolving water.”

Besides the two leads, Zhousheng Ren (Xiao Ren, which means “Little Ren”) is actually my favourite character in the novel. Keep an eye out for him and tell me if you guys like him like I do.

I think I’ve mentioned this in various places before, but *Beautiful Bones* is actually the second book in Mo Bao Fei Bao’s 一生一世 *One Life, One Incarnation* series. Books of the series can be read independently without affecting your understanding of the story. The first book does contain details on the Nan family, the gambling ship cooperation, and Xiao Ren’s mother’s “mishap” that caused her death that were mentioned in this update. A 20-ish year old Zhousheng Chen also makes a few appearances in that story.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

13 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 5.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 5.2

[May 2, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [47 Comments](#)



I love the comments you guys have been leaving, your contemplative questions, your observations of the details, or just your thanks. :) I also wanted to thank you all because I notice everyone seems to be consciously honouring my desire to keep this translation spoiler free and you have not been asking for spoilers (which, in all my translations, this is the first time that has happened!). I loved the mystery atmosphere of this novel when I read it, and I hope you guys are enjoying the slow reveal of information also. Of course, speculation is welcome; we just won't confirm.

Much information is revealed in this chapter! Do you have a new perspective on who Zhousheng Chen is?

Chapter 5.2 – The Tune of Old (2)

Uncle Lin continued, "The Zhousheng family rules are strict, and no one dares to breach them. Eldest Young Master, you need not be concerned. Zhousheng Heng dares not refuse to relinquish the position of leader."

He placed his hand on the edge of the car window. "Let's go."

No lights had been turned on in the car. There was only the moonlight that shone through the window into the interior.

It was very quiet.

Uncle Lin pulled the car away from the curb into the road and began driving steadily. "Why does Eldest Young Master suddenly want to reverse the current situation? To go against the market trend and attract investment to support Jiangnan's economy?"

Because of fatigue, Zhousheng Chen spoke somewhat slowly. "Within the next five to ten years, China will no longer have the cheapest labour in the world market. The manufacturing plants within the country are closing one after another. 'Made in China' will become 'made in Cambodia', 'made in Vietnam', *etc.* The massive numbers of unemployed will be an enormous impact and this must be mitigated in advance."

Uncle Lin fell silent.

This Eldest Young Master was unlike everyone else.

From when he entered university at the age of fourteen, he was destined to be different from everyone else. Five to ten years of investing against market trend required a massive network of contacts and significant funds. Currently, the people who were acting for Zhousheng Chen were just distant family members who did not bear the Zhou surname or his group of aides and advisors, but for such a long-term project, it required his full support. But this would inevitably violate the family rule that dictated that any Zhousheng could not enter into business.

Perhaps, without his uncle, Zhousheng Heng, things might have been simpler.

Shi Yi had thought that he would do the same as before, returning to

Zhenjiang during the day and then coming again to Shanghai late at night. However, she had not expected that, the next morning, when she came back from the gym of a hotel near her apartment, Zhousheng Chen would already be waiting downstairs for her. She was rather surprised, but he said, "I am here to have breakfast with you." At seven o'clock in the morning, someone suddenly appeared and said he was going to have breakfast with you.

She had the sudden notion that this particular scene was very similar to, when she was still a student, those young boys and girls who would arrive downstairs of the dormitories or beside the entrance to the cafeteria.

As luck would have it, though, she had already eaten.

But he was still hungry.

Shi Yi tentatively asked him if he wanted to go upstairs and she would make him something simple for breakfast. Zhousheng Chen did not decline her suggestion. After she brought him upstairs, though, she realized after the fact that she had nothing but milk and some fruit in her home. There was also Nestle Stars cereal on her kitchen shelves. With sounds of "clink, clink, clink," she filled more than half a bowl with some, poured some milk, cut up a plate of fruit, and served them to him.

He sat beside the dining room table, head bowed as he stared at the cutely shaped stars floating in the milk, somewhat at a loss for words.

"I wasn't sure if you would be used to eating this or not." Shi Yi felt a little embarrassed and she impishly stuck out her tongue a bit. "It's pretty good."

"I'll be used to it," he said, unable to hold back his laughter.

Afraid that it would not be enough for him to eat, she purposely brought out the entire box for him.

Zhousheng Chen cast a deliberate glance at the notation on the box: "For ages 6-12."



Nestle Stars is actually officially branded as Estrelitas, according to the Nestle global website, although its known as Kosmostars, Stars, and Estrelitas. The literal translation of the Chinese name is actually “milk and egg stars.”

He smiled, lowered his head, scooped out a spoon of milk with stars, and ate it. She patiently kept him company the whole time.

From observing him carefully, a hint of fatigue could be seen between his brows, and his face looked very pale. Shi Yi could not resist stretching out her hand, wanting to touch his forehead. Sensing her movement, he raised his eyes slightly to gaze at her.

A brief moment of silence.

She did not know whether she should retract her hand or calmly feel his forehead to gauge his temperature.

While she was still hesitating in awkward embarrassment, Zhousheng Chen leaned forward slightly to complement her action and placed his forehead into her hand.

She touched his forehead. Sure enough, it was burning up.

“A low-grade fever,” he told her.

She gave an “mm.”

They had held hands before, but it had been out in public.

Here, though, in this moment, this brightly lit, quiet dining room, she had suddenly touched his skin. Her hand could not help trembling slightly.

Fortunately, she had withdrawn it very quickly and he had not noticed. “Did it never subside or did you catch another cold?”

“It never subsided.” He set down his spoon.

She contemplated for a moment.

He watched her amusedly. “You would like to brew another package of Chinese medicine for me?”

“It won’t work anymore.” She looked at him with a regretful expression. “That herb is purple perilla leaf. When you steep it in water, it can dissipate the coldness in your body. But now, you don’t have just a simple fever because you were affected by cold. I should have made you finish drinking it last time and then sleep here for the night and sweat it out. You would have gotten better very quickly.” When Shi Yi finished saying this, she realized her choice of words could very much be taken the wrong way. Even though they were to be engaged, it seemed that her relationship with him had just progressed to a stage that was a little more intimate than friendship.

If he really was to stay the night.....

Zhousheng Chen seemed unaware that there was anything peculiar and continued eating his fruit with slow and deliberate movements. “Sleep for a night? I may not have had such a long, unbroken period of time available for sleep anyway.”

“What about now?” she asked suddenly.

“Now?”

“Mm-hmm.” She told him, “You just ate. In another twenty minutes, I will give you some medicine to reduce the fever, and then after you have had a good sleep in the guest room, your fever should be gone.” She gazed at him with a serious expression.

Zhousheng Chen was somewhat taken aback but quickly nodded. “Alright. It has been perhaps several months since I have had a good sleep.”

When Shi Yi suggested this, it was truly for his sake.

As a result, she did not think there was anything inappropriate and just swiftly

tidied up the guest room, putting some fresh sheets on the bed while carrying out a casual dialogue with him. When he had taken the medication and laid down on the bed, she left the room and went to clean up the breakfast dishes.

Under the cool stream of water, she leisurely washed the dishes.

Before her eyes, she seemed as if she could still see his face. Fine, graceful features that did not leave an impression, except his nose, which was very straight. When he lay on the bed, he was very still, as if, the instant he closed his eyes, he had fallen into a deep sleep. So calm and unguarded, such that she could even sense his complete trust.

She had just finished putting away the clean dishes when she suddenly remembered that, after taking the medication, he would perspire.

What was he going to do when he woke up?

Still wear those sweaty clothes?

The thought had just occurred and then she heard light knocking on her door. Opening it, she saw Uncle Lin, who did not offer any detailed explanation, saying only that he was delivering Young Master's clean clothing that he always kept on hand if required. Shi Yi could set her mind at ease now as she sighed over how thorough he was, that everything would be judiciously and meticulously prepared. She placed the garments into a clean rattan basket, pushed open the bedroom door, and slipped it inside.

This apartment's layout was very well designed. Both the master bedroom and the guest bedroom each had its own bathroom.

She thought, Zhousheng Chen would not need her reminder and would most certainly take a shower after he woke up.

The whole morning, because Zhousheng Chen was sleeping inside the guest bedroom, her heart felt as if it was drifting and would not settle down. Finally, she pulled out a box of DVDs and started watching television dramas. Her work schedule was at times open and other times very demanding, and it was

impossible for her to sit in front of the television promptly everyday and follow a television series. It was only during her rest periods that she would find some films or dramas she was interested in and watch them from beginning to end to avoid having to keep thinking about them.

The sunlight was too intense, so she drew the curtains to dim the room.

Afraid that she would disturb his rest, she put on her headphones and fixed her eyes on the subtitles, becoming engrossed in her watching.

She watched episode after episode in succession and completely lost track of time.

She felt the seat beside her on the couch suddenly sink in. Whipping her head around, she saw him sitting there. His hair was still wet, and it was apparent he had already showered after awakening. He wore a pair of light blue, wool pants with a white, button-up shirt, so clean and fresh he seemed like a student who had not yet completed his schooling.

“Why are you awake already?” Shi Yi pulled down her headset.

“I am not accustomed to sleeping for very long periods of time.” He glanced at the silent images that were playing on the screen. “You have been watching TV all this time?”

She nodded and reached to test the temperature of his forehead again.

Thank goodness, his fever was gone.

“Don’t you have a family doctor? How come you had a fever and you still didn’t take any medication for it?”

“I have one, but for this type of mild fever, I usually will simply recover on my own.”

She answered him with an “oh,” her headset still hanging around her neck as she glanced at his slightly damp hair. “If you aren’t in a hurry to go, sit for a while.”

“There is nothing immediate. I will be clearing the schedule for this whole week to keep you company.” He relaxed his entire body and leaned back into the sofa. “It is already very busy before the engagement, but it will be even busier after.”

She gave an “mm” and looked at him.

“You have something you want to say?” he asked with a knowing chuckle. His voice sounded tired and was somewhat soft.

“Nothing serious.” She turned and also leaned sideways against the couch so that they were face to face. “I was just all of a sudden curious, why did you want to go into scientific research? Was it really because you didn’t know what you wanted to do and just randomly chose that?”

“To do something that could be beneficial to other people.” He truly was seriously reflecting on how to answer Shi Yi’s question. “And research is something that could possibly benefit even more people.”

She answered “mm” again.

“In my family, there are not many of this type of person, but there are still a few. My younger sister, for example,” he said, “since birth has had insufficient blood flow to her heart, so her health is not good. However, she has been studying in medical school, simply because she wants to do more and help save a few more people.”

His voice, when he spoke about his younger sister, had a sense of tenderness.

At home, when she was watching something, she always wore glasses. And now, sitting before her, Zhousheng Chen was also wearing glasses.

Their eyes, separated by the thin lenses of those glasses, would from time to time connect.

Resting against the couch, she chatted idly with him. Just doing this alone was such a pleasure.

From where she was, she had a view of the glass wall separating the living and dining rooms. On that glass, she could see her and Zhousheng Chen’s reflection.

Their outlines were very clear, but their individual facial features were indistinct.

She remembered, in their previous life, the first time she had seen him. She was standing on the walls of the city gates, holding onto the edge of the wall, where she needed to strain her eyes somewhat before, under the dawning light,

she was able to see him off in the distance. His features were also indistinct then, and she could only see the outline of his backside. At that time, someone beside her had said, “Eleven^[1], hereafter, he is your teacher.” She had nodded her head slightly. Prior to sneaking here for a peek of him, she had already heard this name before: Zhousheng Chen. It sounded refined, respectable, and honorable, like someone well-versed in poetry and literatures.

But what she beheld was completely different.

What she had envisioned was a teacher holding a scroll in his hand.

And what fell into her gaze was the Xiao Nanchen Prince with shining spears and armoured horse.

That day.

Dawn had broken the long night. The entire army was mobilized. The rising smoke of the beacon fires served as backdrop. Yellow sand filled the sky.

He stood high on the platform, overlooking the army. With a wave of his hand, there was a resounding sound as seven hundred thousand soldiers knelt before him. This was the true Zhousheng Chen — the Xiao Nan Chen Prince, with thousands of retainers who had sworn allegiance to his family, and the one who held the control of an army of seven hundred thousand.



Was it truly “beauty is offered, a soul is given in return^[2]” [the soul is swept away by the appearance before the eyes]? Or a mind bewitched by love?

She, at age six or seven then, did not understand any of that. She was only awed and overcome by the scene before her eyes. Her hands gripped beneath

them the city walls of brick, and her heart beat furiously.

[1] 十一 “shí yī.” Eleven. In Mandarin, it is spoken shí yī, which sounds very similar to our female lead, 时宜 Shí Yí’s name, with only the tone of the “yī”s being different. Nickname for ancient Shi Yi.

[2] 色授魂与 “se shou hun yu.” A line from Shi Yi’s favourite ancient poem/rhapsody from the Han dynasty, “Shanglin Fu”, which has been translated by some scholars as “Rhapsody of the Imperial Park.” The entire rhapsody is translated [here](#), should you be interested, and this particular line is interpreted as “Beauty is offered, the spirit consents” (stanza VI, 420). I am not going to quote it directly from this translation. I am certain I am not nearly as well-studied as the author of this translation, but I decided to be less poetic/artistic with my version and translate it so that (I believe) the meaning is more clear. To be even more explicit, “a remarkable outward appearance is presented before the eyes and a soul is swept away by what is seen.” Here in the story, then, the question is meant to read, was Shi Yi’s soul already swept away the instant she saw him, saw his impressive manner and outward appearance? This line and several others from the rhapsody make its appearance several times in the novel.

Additional Comments:

I actually had chosen that last pic to be the cover pic but ended up deciding against it because I really wanted the last bit in the ancient setting to sneak up on you like a little surprise. I’ll provide a more detailed explanation of ancient Zhousheng Chen’s title, Xiao Nanchen Prince later in the story at a more appropriate time.

I forgot which one of you guys said that Zhousheng Chen also wants to please Shi Yi, but the idea of proper, composed Zhousheng Chen eating Stars cereal just tickles me. Such a funny image, but at the same time, it shows he yet again cannot refuse Shi Yi, just like when she asked him to take the herbal medicine that he hates. What do you think Shi Yi’s cereal choice reveals about her

personality?

By the way, I don't believe Nestle Stars/Kosmostars/Estrelitas is sold where I live. Have you guys seen it? Which country?

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

15 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 5.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 5.3

[May 6, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [47 Comments](#)



I know this is technically a *Beautiful Bones* post, but I just had to share that I saw a pic of the [cover](#) for *Really, Really Miss You* (strawberries everywhere!) and some bonus little chibi drawings that will be included with the first batch of the published novel. Release should be soon! (They have given the story the official English name, “Miss You.”)

Poetry, calligraphy, traditional Chinese medicine, and Stanford-Binet IQ tests.
>_< What a fun ride translating this chapter was.

Chapter 5.3 – The Tune of Old (3)

The she and he of the past had once been separated by their teacher-disciple relationship, separated by her betrothal, arranged even prior to her birth, to someone else. From when she was age seven to seventeen, her knowledge of the four arts of the qin^[1], chess^[2], calligraphy, and painting; her behavior and how she conducted herself in society; and even every book, every line of poem or lyric she knew was a result of his teaching. From when she was naïve and unaware of

the world to when it was all so deeply integrated into her very being, like it had penetrated into her bone and blood.

Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return[\[3\]](#). [Love expressed even in silence.]

A mind bewitched by love.

She used ten years to truly understand the meaning of those two lines.

“Tired?” Zhousheng Chen suddenly asked her.

Shi Yi shook her head. “I was just thinking about something.” Worried that he might ask further, she quickly added, “Stuff from work.”

After finding out that he did not have any work or family commitments, she deliberately told him that she had worked very late the previous night and was rather tired. The two of them spent the entire day in her home. There were plenty of things available to pass the time, and he chose Go. The way he held his stones was very attractive, and also very familiar.

Sometimes, Shi Yi would pretend to be deliberating over the game and quietly steal glances at him as he played.

She surmised, he was probably aware of what she was doing, but he simply allowed her to do it.



Game of Go. ([Image credit](#))

He brought her to what would be their new home.

The yard was small and the house was three levels. The interior décor gave a sense that it was like a piece of white notepaper, with colors that were not

vibrant but carried a calming atmosphere. From the instant she walked in, she would instinctively lower her voice every time she spoke. She suddenly wondered, if it was anyone else and not herself as his fiancée, would that person feel that everything he did was inharmonious — a feeling that he was inharmonious with the era?

For her, she had never felt there was anything uncomfortable with him.

As the person who was about to become his betrothed, it stood to reason that she should be involved in everything. Zhousheng Chen did not believe he was entitled to dictate everything, and even something like the wooden block watercolor imprint[\[4\]](#) that was to be used on the invitations, he personally brought to her to have a look and to ask her which type of calligraphic script she preferred. When they were discussing this, it was during the break in between his conversation with his aides.

On a dark brown desktop, there lay a row of wooden block carvings, and beside each of the carvings was a long strip of xuan paper[\[5\]](#).

He had instructed people to carve her name onto the blocks and then imprint it onto the paper. In fact, she recognized each one of the calligraphy styles that were there in front of her, and even knew the stories behind each of them. She asked him, “Normally, which one do you like to use?”

“The older generation holds in esteem styles of the Tang dynasty and likes the uprightness and properness of regular script[\[6\]](#), but specifically which calligrapher’s style, that comes down to personal preference.”

She nodded. Of the four great masters of regular script[\[7\]](#), only Zhao Mengfu was of the Yuan dynasty. Without hesitation, she eliminated in her mind that particular strip of paper.

Then, she very accurately pulled out the remaining three calligrapher’s styles and placed them before the two of them.

She, however, did not notice the slight hint of surprise in Zhousheng Chen’s eyes. He had not expected that she could so accurately recognize each calligrapher’s script.

“I really like Yan Zhenqing’s writing, but his death could be considered a tragic one[8]. Would it be not very auspicious, then?” She was hit with an inexplicable superstitious mood. “Liu Gongquan’s writing is too rigid and strict. Would it be not very suitable for an engagement ceremony invitation?” She was murmuring to herself, hesitant over which to choose, but then soon turned around and felt that she was overthinking this. It was just the calligraphy style that would be used on the invitation; there was no need to take it so seriously.

Zhousheng Chen seemed to think nothing of her over-pondering. He pulled out the only paper of calligraphy style she had not rejected. “The calligraphy strokes are strong and cutting, yet do not fail to still be graceful and free. Ouyang Xun’s script is very good.” When he finished saying this, he summoned for someone to take away that strip of xuan paper.

He raised his wrist to glance at the time, then told her that following this, there were many arranged happenings that were not suitable for his participation.

Initially, she had found this odd, but after watching the outline of his backside disappear into the study, she discovered that there was a familiar face, held tilted to the side and smiling, on the other side of the door. It was the girl from the other night who had taken her measurements.

She suddenly understood what he meant by “not suitable for his participation.”

That night, when she had chosen fabric and had her measurements taken in the girl’s old home, only four people, the grandmother and her three grandchildren, plus an old woman who served tea and poured water, had been present. She had felt, at the time, that besides the antiquated courtyard home setting, there was nothing peculiar about them. But now, from watching the girl as she walked in, followed behind by more than a dozen exquisitely dressed middle-aged women, she could already sense what Zhousheng Chen had meant in his description of them as an “influential family of generations.”

Some of the middle-aged women’s hands were holding garments that were covered by deep red fabric, while others were helping to carry a long wooden box.

She looked over toward them but could not guess what that box would contain.

After the girl had greeted her, she signaled to the people to open up the box, and then soon, standing upright there was a dark red frame for hanging clothing.

It would seem, coming here to deliver clothing actually required bringing one's own wooden frame as well to hang the garments.

She suddenly realized this.

The girl understood the look on her face and, feeling also that this act was annoyingly troublesome, explained, "Grandmother said, any matter pertaining to the Eldest Young Master of the Zhousheng family must be done with all the formalities." Seeing Shi Yi's surprised expression, the girl could not help sighing, "No choice. The one you're going to marry, Miss Shi Yi, is, after all, surnamed Zhousheng — and there is only one every generation."

Someone removed the cloths that had been used as covering and hung up the dozen or more dresses.

Gazing at them, Shi Yi exhaled a long breath. "So beautiful."

"You like them? Honestly like them?" the girl laughed. "Then let me tell you this. Right now, it's just engagement. My [maternal] grandmother's health has not been very good lately, so these designs are all by us three siblings. If it was the wedding, Grandmother would definitely take on the work personally, and then, it wouldn't be just 'nice-looking.'" As she spoke, she, too, seemed as if she was looking forward to this.

With a contented sigh, Shi Yi said thank you to her.

Someone had hung up a cloth curtain.

Shi Yi cooperatively tried the gowns on, one by one. She finally remembered she had never asked the girl for her name.

"My name is Wang Man." Wang Man meticulously looked over the dress she was trying on at the moment. She puckered her lips and motioned with a nod for her to look in the mirror. "No wonder Grandmother said Eldest Young Master treats you so well it could not possibly get any better. You are the only girl in his

family who is not required to wear a cheongsam in an open, social situation.”

“Is wearing a cheongsam a must?” she asked, finding this peculiar.

However, after carefully recalling the first meeting with his mother and also after, the meal near Jinshan Temple, where she had met his younger cousin-sister and cousin-sister-in-law, she realized they really had all been wearing cheongsam. Regardless of what sort of fabric or what type of design had been used for their garments, none of them could escape the restraints of the traditional cheongsam.

“I’ve only heard Grandmother mention before that those wealthy, high-class families have many different sorts of rules, so making clothes for people from those families is so boring.”

Wang Man was scrutinizing the end of the sleeve, and it seemed she was pondering whether she should remove some of the embellishments.

A beauty did not need excessive adornment. Being simple and minimal was actually the best option.

In the end, Shi Yi finally chose a gown that surprisingly actually revealed the lower half of her calf, but the sleeve still went down to her forearm.

The most important point was, this particular dress’s design was very similar to a cheongsam.....

Wang Man saw through her intention and could not help laughing. She instructed someone to remove the screen that had been used as a partition for Shi Yi to change privately and was just about call Zhousheng Chen in to see when they heard Shi Yi’s mobile phone ring. Shi Yi picked up her phone off of the table and walked over to the window to answer the call. She had just answered it when she heard a man’s voice give a light cough.

Turning around, she saw a man and a woman standing at the door.

Unfamiliar faces.

This was not surprising. Since being with him, every face she saw was an unfamiliar one. What was actually more peculiar were Wang Man’s momentary

shocked expression and her eyes that were locked on that young man. Shi Yi also followed her gaze and looked over in that direction. The man was wearing a pair of light-colored pants, a green, checkered-pattern button-down shirt, and a black suit jacket.

His tall height was able to suppress the frivolousness of the green color.

It actually gave him a sense of being charming, free, and unconstrained.

The young man gave a slight nod to Wang Man and then turned his eyes to Shi Yi. "I am guessing that this lady who is so beautiful she causes people's jaws to drop must be my older brother's fiancée, correct?"

Shi Yi was a little taken aback, but she still nodded and answered, "Hello. I am Shi Yi."

"Hello." The young man walked over to her, stretched out his arms, and, as she was about to extend her own hand to shake his in greeting, gave her a warm, enthusiastic hug. "I'm Zhou Wenchuan. Zhousheng Chen is my older brother."

This man's spoken Chinese actually sounded quite out of practice.

He was completely unlike Zhousheng Chen.

Even so, Shi Yi was still able to recognize that he had their mother's eyes, eyes that slanted upward.

So, this person was one of the twins he had once mentioned — Zhou Wenchuan.

Only after the two of them had separated from the embrace did Zhou Wenchuan beckon to his female companion. He told her, "This is my wife, Tong Jiaren." Tong Jiaren walked toward her but was not as affectionate as Zhou Wenchuan, simply shaking her hand and then letting it go.

A rather cool person, and even slightly hostile.

Shi Yi could not understand why the atmosphere in the room was so strange.

While she was hesitating over what sort of identity and status she should use to receive them, the door to the adjacent small meeting room was opened from the inside. He seemed to have heard the voices coming from the outside. In the meeting room, the men, whether they were sitting or standing, were all wearing

black suits and were so stern in appearance they seemed as if they were in the midst of life and death negotiations. Zhousheng Chen stepped out and instructed someone to shut the door.

He was not wearing a jacket. The top button at his shirt collar was undone, and in his right hand were his glasses. He raised his eyes slightly and glanced around at the people in the room before his gaze very naturally landed on Shi Yi. "It looks very nice."

Shi Yi smiled, but before she had a chance to speak, Wang Man had already heaved a sigh of relief. "That's great that you think it looks nice."

She seemed unwilling to stay and quickly told her attendants to pack everything up.

As she was taking her leave, Zhousheng Chen unexpectedly spoke up and asked Wang Man to stay and have dinner with them. "You and Wenchuan have known each other since childhood. It has been many years since you last saw one another?"

Wang Man cast a glance at Zhou Wenchuan. "About three or four years."

"Has it been?" Zhou Wenchuan thought for a moment. "That's about right."

And so, the subject was brushed over and no further details were given.

Dinner was at their home, and after the meal, they sat out in the garden and chatted. To Shi Yi's surprise, she determined from the conversation that Tong Jiaren and Zhousheng Chen had once been schoolmates. There was not a large age difference between the two of them, but by the time she had started university, Zhousheng Chen had already received his doctorate degree.

"According to the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, this brother of mine very much so meets the standards of being gifted, with his IQ of 190." Zhou Wenchuan chuckled and crossed his left leg over his right. "At age twelve, he was already receiving invitations from universities. Age fourteen, he entered university. Age nineteen, he received his PhD in chemical engineering."

Laughing lightly, Wang Man jumped in, "You've bragged about your older

brother so much people's ears have already gone numb from listening."

Zhou Wenchuan shook his head and laughed.

Wang Man continued, "According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the smartest person in the world is not Eldest Young Master. That person at two years old already knew four languages, at four years old was sitting in on university courses, and at fifteen years old had gotten a PhD in physics.

Zhou Wenchuan raised his eyebrows. "Hey, little girl, you're always trying to argue with me."

Shi Yi burst out in amused laughter.

However, the subject of their conversation did not seem like he was very interested. Glancing at him from the corner of her eye, Shi Yi tried to guess, was he thinking about his research project in Xi'an or about other matters in the family? It seemed the way things were now was quite enjoyable already. He was able to sit here quietly beside her, and from time to time, she could freely observe him while making fanciful guesses about what he might be thinking.

Shi Yi reigned in her train of thought back to the present.

But she unexpectedly discovered Tong Jiaren subtly shifting her gaze away.

Only Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi were sitting in the direction she had been looking.

Shi Yi did not know whether she had been looking at her, or at him.

The two people who had been debating about IQ had now switched the topic over to moxibustion[\[9\]](#). Wang Man was saying, she had returned from London and had since left behind that type of diet that caused one to easily put on weight, but to her surprise, she had actually gained a little weight instead since coming back. "Every night, in the old manor house, I do aerobics until late into the night, then in the morning it's yoga. I don't eat a lot of rice or bread or noodles, either, but still, I'm not seeing results."

Whenever a girl talked about losing weight, it would always be like this.

Regardless of whether you were of a wealthy, influential family or whether you had a pair of hands that were capable of sewing heavenly clothing, you would

still need to be concerned about your weight.

Zhou Wenchuan merely laughed, “Be careful that your aerobics and jumping don’t cause granny to have a heart attack.” He looked over at his newlywed wife. “Jiaren, I remember you told your cousin that there is a method you can use that involves moxibustion and massage?”

Tong Jiaren was lost in thought and did not seem to have heard.

Zhou Wenchuan tapped her lightly on the arm with his hand, and with a half-smile, he asked, “What are you thinking?”

“Huh? Um, nothing.” Tong Jiaren looked confusedly at him. “What did you say?”

“I said, do you have some sort of method that uses moxibustion and massage to lose weight?”

“It’s not for losing weight, it’s to boost metabolism.” Tong Jiaren placed her fingers on the midline of her lower abdomen, three cun[\[10\]](#) below her navel. “Right here is the Guan Yuan [“Origin Pass”] acupoint. Moxibustion and massage at this point can dispel dampness[\[11\]](#), promote diuresis, boost kidney function, and overall increase organ and gut health. Usually, if your metabolism is good, your body will not retain too much junk or fat in it, and so you won’t become overweight. This can be considered the healthiest way to lose weight.” When Tong Jiaren spoke, she was very nice and polite, but she gave off a sense of aloofness.

“Have you committed all that to memory?” Zhou Wenchuan looked at Wang Man.

A hint of displeasure could be sensed coming from Wang Man. She did not say thank you nor answer Zhou Wenchuan.

There was a moment of awkwardness.

Shi Yi had been observing them up to this point, and she increasingly felt that the relationship between all of them was extremely delicate and complicated.

She smiled and suddenly spoke up. “Also, Wang Man, you need to remember,

moxibustion to this acupoint can cause excessive internal heat. So remember to drink a glass of warm water before and after the treatment, or you can pair it with moxibustion to the Yong Quan [“Gushing Spring”] acupoint on the sole of the feet to lower your internal heat.”

She had merely wanted to thaw the tension.

Instead, she brought about Zhousheng Chen’s interest. “You have knowledge of acupoints?”

With an “mm,” she replied, “A little bit.”

Much of what she knew was only basic knowledge.

However, because it was he of the past who had taught her, she had over and over again forced herself to keep it all firmly in her mind and had never forgotten any of it.

Including calligraphy, including moxibustion and acupoints.

After the guests had all left, she continued to sit with him in the garden.

Those people who had discussed business with Zhousheng Chen in the afternoon brought over a stack of papers for him to look over. Shi Yi very tactfully moved her gaze away and went to look at the colourful koi that were in the pond. All of a sudden, a golden koi leapt up out of the water, then with a smack, landed back inside again.

The light splashing sound seemed to contrast and emphasize tonight’s peacefulness.

He took the pen that was offered to him and signed his name on the lower right of one of the papers. After the men had left, he used two fingers to lightly massage between his brows before slipping on his glasses.

Then, he turned his head to look at her.

The side profile of Shi Yi’s face was very beautiful. The moonlight’s reflection could be seen in her eyes, which, because she was trying to avoid looking at his business matters, were focused on the pond and the rockery beside it. She was not showing even the slightest impatience. He was reminded of a phrase that

was used to describe beautiful women. “The most beautiful are those who are not aware of their beauty.”

When he had first met her, he had suspected that she had been a part of someone’s scheme, to use her outstanding appearance to get close to him. But now, he truly conceded that she had genuinely only wanted to meet him.

A very simple, pure intention.

In the moonlight, she was watching the koi and he was watching her.

He was reminded of the line:

Beneath long, curved brows, sidelong gazes are cast again and again. Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return, and the heart rejoices to be at one another’s side.

[1] 琴 “qin”. This is referring to the 古琴 “guqin” [“gu” meaning old], which was considered the instrument of the scholarly. It was one of the first string instruments in Chinese history, in existence for more than 3000 years, even in the time of Confucius.



[Image credit](#)

[2] 棋 “qi.” The chess is generally referring to Go and sometimes, Chinese chess.

[3] The previous explanation of this line from the rhapsody in the previous chapter was a more literal explanation. What this line also tries to express is that when love is mutually known to exist between two people, it can be expressed without spoken words – through actions, through expressions, through eyes, etc.

[4] See footnote [10], chapter 2.3

[5]宣纸 “xuan zhi.” Also called “rice paper.” A special type of white paper known for its softness, fine texture, strength, and absorption. Used since ancient times in China for brush calligraphy and painting, it is actually resistant to aging and decay, and hence, most of the ancient art and calligraphy that has survived the ages are on xuan paper.

[6] See footnote [1] in chapter 4.1.

[7]楷书四家. The four calligraphers in Chinese history recognized for especially for their calligraphy using regular script are Ouyang Xun (of the Tang dynasty), Yan Zhenqing (of the Tang dynasty), Liu Gongquan (of the Tang dynasty) and Zhao Mengfu (of the Yuan dynasty).

[8]颜真卿 Yan Zhenqing was a calligrapher and held various positions as an official of the imperial court during the Tang dynasty. During a rebellion against the dynasty, he was sent to negotiate with the leader of the rebels, and after refusing to surrender, was strangled to death.

[9]艾灸 “ai jiu.” A traditional Chinese medicine technique in which healing is facilitated by burning mugwort, an herb. Moxa, which is made from mugwort, is burned during an acupuncture treatment, either directly, by placing it in contact with the acupoint on the body, or indirectly by being held over but not in contact with the body.

[10]寸 “cun.” A traditional Chinese unit of length where, because each person is a unique size and shape, it uses a person’s body as a way to take measurements. 1 cun = the width of one’s thumb at the knuckle. 3 cun = the width of all four fingers placed side by side together.

cunfinger

[Image credit](#)

[11] In traditional Chinese medicine, there are six climatic “evils” that can enter and are detrimental to the body, and dampness is one of them.

Additional Comments:

I'm going to briefly explain what happened in the calligraphy selection scene, just in case it is not obvious to everyone.

The engagement invitations were going to use the woodblock imprinting technique for the calligraphy. Shi Yi's name was hand carved into many different wooden blocks, and each block used a different calligraphy style. In Chinese calligraphy, the script of famous calligraphers is imitated and that is what is referred to as a "calligraphy style."

When Shi Yi asked Zhousheng Chen which style he preferred, he answered that people in his family preferred regular script and things of the Tang dynasty. Shi Yi, therefore, automatically honed in on wooden blocks that had her name carved in regular script and found the styles of the four masters known for their calligraphy in regular script. Immediately, she eliminated the one calligrapher who was not from the Tang dynasty so she ended up pulling out three wooden blocks.

Now, recognizing calligraphy style is not a simple task, and only someone who has studied Chinese calligraphy would be able, in a glance, to recognize which style belongs to which calligrapher. That is why Zhousheng Chen was surprised. And then, for her to be able to know the history of the calligraphers (like what she said for Yan Zhenqing) and understand the distinctiveness of each style (like how she described Liu Gongquan) only further demonstrated how learned she was.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

16 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#)

| [Permalink](#).

Insert Chapter 1.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Insert Chapter 1.1

[May 9, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [35 Comments](#)



I am going to be on holidays all next week. I will work hard and have the Tuesday night/Wednesday morning post ready to go and have it auto-post for me. I may not be able to get the following post ready for next Friday night/Saturday morning.

Hundreds of years ago, this is how their story began...

Insert Chapter 1.1 – Beautiful Bones (1)

She still could remember, the day he became her teacher was a brilliantly sunny day.

In this generation of the Cui family of Qinghe, she was actually the only female in the lineal descent. The others had mostly died in infancy. Because of her family's great power and influence, when she was still in her mother's womb, her hand had already been promised in marriage to the crown prince. According to

her childhood wet nurses, if at the time, a male had been born instead, the child would likely have been secretly swapped for a girl for the sole purpose that one day, she would reside in the palace of the empress.

Fortunately, it had been a girl.

But alas, this girl was born with the inability to speak.

Thus, for this reason, she became the student of the Xiao Nanchen Prince^[1], the prince who held the control of a great army of seven hundred thousand, the one whom the empress dowager was most fearful of, and the youngest uncle of the crown prince. He, however, was not born of the empress dowager herself. According to Mother, this act would give her a strong supporter, and at the same time, she could use her teacher-disciple status with him to, in the future, bring in the support of this uncle for the crown prince.

One move, two gains.

Two birds with one stone.

She seemed to understand, yet not quite, all the stakes and complicated interactions, but when she recalled that day, how a single wave from this teacher's hand had caused the entire army to kneel in unison and the air of authority he had emitted, she had a feeling of eager anticipation. If she had not already secretly had a glimpse of him that day, she would have thought that Xiao Nanchen Prince was actually over thirty years old; otherwise, he could not have such outstanding military achievements that caused the imperial family to tread cautiously with him.

Under the observing eyes of many people, Shi Yi very carefully and properly bowed and paid the ceremonial respects of a disciple to her teacher. Taking the cup of tea someone beside her had handed to her, she gripped it with her two little hands, and, one step at a time, approached the young man who was sitting there in the center.

The liquid in the cup swayed back and forth slightly, causing ripples to form.

With every step she took, she did not dare lose her focus, until she finally stood before him and very respectfully raised the tea cup above her head.

She thought, if it was any of the other disciples, they would have reverently said, “Teacher, please have tea,” but she could only stand there quietly. The only thing she could do was hold the cup steady with both her hands. Very quickly, a hand took the cup from her. His other hand held the cup’s lid as he gently took a sip. “Shi Yi, you are called Eleven at home?” Eleven raised her head and looked at him with sparkling eyes as she nodded.

“As it turns out, I have ten disciples already. Would it be alright if I also call you Eleven?”

He did not address himself as “your teacher” and merely used “I.” [2]

Shi Yi stared blankly at him in slight surprise and could not help glancing at her mother, who was far off to the side.

Only after Mother gave a nod did she also nod her head. She thought, such a strange teacher and prince.

Many years afterward, when she thought about that day, she could still clearly remember it. He had been wearing a turquoise-colored long robe, and there seemed to be a smile in his eyes, like a warm ray of dazzling sunlight on a cloudy day. Xiao Nanchen Prince, whose name had become renowned when he was still a youth and whose military feats were illustrious, yet still treated each one of his disciples, soldiers, and generals well, was from that day forward her teacher. And this was something that would never change for this lifetime.

She was the future crown princess, so she was different from her other ordinary senior brothers and senior sisters [3]. In the prince’s manor, she had her own separate courtyard with its own entrance and her own personal maids. But it was also for this reason that, in the first two years under his discipleship, she had been ostracized. Because of her status, those people did not dare do anything to her, but they treated her coldly, as if she was a stranger. This did not overly affect her as it was also because of her status that she even more so had Teacher’s affection. She would frequently accompany him alone in his study and was even allowed to go up into the forbidden place of the prince’s manor — the library tower.

Then, when Teacher became aware of their actions and admonished them, all

her senior brothers and sisters finally began to slowly accept her. She could not speak and would always smile. Her smiles would make each person feel warm and happy, so although her outer appearance was merely average and not outstanding, everyone was fond of her.

However, Teacher still only allowed her alone to go up the library tower. Some senior brothers could not resist bringing a brush and paper to her and asking her what treasures were contained within there that it would be a prohibited place of the prince's manor. Each time, she would shake her head and smile but not write anything, and occasionally, her eyes would flicker away evasively.

Inside, the library tower was only three levels high, and all year round, the scent of pines and bamboo pervaded the air. When the lamps were not lit, it was very dim. The first time she went there, she had actually snuck in in secret also. Shortly after she had come to reside in the prince's manor, the enemy army of a neighbouring country had initiated a large-scale invasion of the border areas, and Teacher had led an army into battle in defense. At the time, she did not know any other person. Hence, covering one wall of the library tower, in her handwriting, were poems, all of them ones she had recited with her mother since she was a child.

She did not really comprehend the meanings of those poems, but she was able to easily write them out.

When Zhousheng Chen returned, two entire walls of the library tower were covered with her writing.

Unable to find her deep in the night, her maidservant had quietly sought out Zhousheng Chen for help. If it was made known outside of the manor that the daughter of the Cui family of Qinghe had disappeared in the middle of the night, it would be a disgrace for the entire manor. The maidservant did not have the authority to make any decisions and did not know what to do. Zhousheng Chen, therefore, searched the entire manor alone until, when he went to the top level of the library tower, he saw the girl child, who had so carefully presented the tea to him on the day she became his disciple, writing Sima Xiangru's "Shanglin Fu"

[“Rhapsody of the Imperial Park”][\[4\]](#).

The words flowed easily off her brush, and there was not a single error.

But, she was stuck on that line that was about the feelings between a man and a woman: *Beneath long, curved brows, sidelong gazes are cast again and again.*

At a loss, she clutched her brush tightly and came down from the bamboo chair. She dared not even raise her head to look at her teacher, who, in the moonlight, had an amused expression on his face. “Have you forgotten the second half of that line?” Zhousheng Chen walked over, got down on one knee, and asked her in a warm voice.

Eleven pressed her lips together, not really wanting to admit it but in the end, still nodded silently.

Teacher suddenly stretched out his hand and wiped away the ink on her face.

The feel of his finger was somewhat rough, not soft like Mother’s. But it had the same warmth and the same gentleness.

He let out little laugh. “The second half of the line is, ‘*Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return, and the heart rejoices to be at one another’s side.*’”

Her head whipped up, and she looked elatedly at Teacher. When she turned around, wanting to climb back up onto the bamboo chair, she felt herself rising up into the air as he lifted her up from behind her. “Write. I will hold you.” She nodded, feeling slightly nervous as well as somewhat delighted, which resulted in the handwriting for these characters, when she wrote them, to be quite different from the others.

She wanted to continue, but Teacher had already set her down. “Go sleep now. When you complete your studies, come back to finish the remainder.”

Thus, within the library tower, there was an incomplete poem written in her handwriting.

In her mind, she even thought of this as a secret.



Zhousheng Chen holding Eleven up to write on the library tower walls. This chibi drawing was done by a Chinese online artist specifically for this scene from the story.

Later, as she gradually grew older, she was able to comprehend the true meaning behind this line:

The woman offers her beauty, the man gives his soul in return. They develop mutual feelings and united hearts, and the heart is poured out to that person beside.

Each time Teacher left the manor, it would be for a minimum of half a month but could be as long as three months, and she would secretly go to the library tower. On some afternoons, she would open the window, and there would always be a breeze that blew in. In the summer, it would be a little hotter and

more oppressive, while in the winter, it would be a little chillier and more biting. If there was wind, then there would be noise, whether it was the moaning cry of the air passing through several shelves or the swishing sound as it brushed over the scrolls.

In the beginning, she was small in stature and would always stand on the bamboo chair, but as she slowly grew taller, she no longer needed to use it.

She would never need to tell him, for Zhousheng Chen would still always be able to find her in that place. And then, on the same column, he would measure whether she had grown taller in the time he had been away. Each time she unexpectedly saw him again after he returned, she would always be extremely happy, but unable to express it with words, she would tentatively hook her index finger around his little finger and swing her hand, refusing to let go of him.

“Eleven.” Whenever he spoke to her, he would always lower himself onto one knee and use a gentle tone. “You look the prettiest when you are smiling. Always smile, yes?” The corner of her lips turned up in a smile.

Days passed, months elapsed, years slipped by.

Qin, chess, calligraphy, and painting — she was not an expert in all of them. She had a preference for chess and painting.

The former, she could use to pass the time with Teacher in the library tower, while the latter, she could use when Teacher was taking care of official matters to capture his appearance and expressions. She dared not blatantly paint him and would hide everything — those eyes, that demeanor and poise, his every frown or smile, the Teacher who was asleep, tired, or filled with rage because of the battlefield situations — amongst painted flowers, grass, and landscape.

Only she could look at them, only she could understand them.

She was forbidden to leave the prince’s manor, so naturally, her views of the outside world were much more limited than her senior brothers and sisters. Once every ten days, they would come together for a shared dinner, and each time, she would always be able to listen to the senior brothers who had already

accompanied Teacher out to the battlefield before enthusiastically describe how his sword would direct the army of thousands and he would lead the charge before his soldiers. And her senior sisters would recount what was said of Teacher and his reputation out in the marketplace gossip.

“Eleven, do you think that Teacher is very handsome?”

She paused briefly in surprise, thought for a moment, then gave a slight nod of her head.

If Teacher could not be considered handsome, then there was no one in this world who was pleasing to the eye.

“Have you ever heard of ‘beautiful bones’?” Her youngest senior sister leaned against her shoulder and whispered, “Beautiful bones, rare in this world. Those with bone do not have skin, those with skin do not have bone.[\[5\]](#)’ Xiao Nan Chen Prince is the only man in this world who has beauty of both the skin and the bones. The common folk all say that this is even more rare than having emperor’s bones.”

The last part of what this little senior sister had said were words of heresy.

“Xiao Nanchen Prince — the one who has thousands of retainers who have sworn allegiance to his family, holds the control of an army of seven hundred thousand, and has magnificent military accomplishments — should have divided up the land, created new borders, and established a new, ordered, and just realm.”

Her eyes flashed.

She knew this senior sister had indulged too much in drink and had forgotten that this junior sister who could not engage in gossip was actually the crown princess.

A person’s whose existence was for the sole purpose of becoming worthy of the imperial family and for gaining the support of Xiao Nanchen Prince.

Flustered from listening to this, after dinner, she secretly slipped up into the library tower again. She had not expected, though, that Teacher would be there, the lamps and candles unlit as he stood beside the window, lost in thought. Through the gaps between the wooden shelves, she stood and watched Teacher

from afar. She thought of her senior sister's words. Beautiful bones. Those words may have sounded beautiful, but they were also like shackles.

Growing tired from her watching, she sat down and drifted off to sleep.

The next time she opened her eyes, the sky was already starting to brighten, but she did not see Teacher. There was only his long robe that was covering her body. The garment was cold; he had likely left long ago. This was the first time that she had fallen asleep here and Teacher had not carried her down out of the tower.

Shi Yi's fingers followed the cuff of the sleeve and gently traced a circle around its edge.

This action alone already caused her cheeks to grow hot. Many years ago, she had only known how to recite up to, "Beneath long, curved brows, sidelong gazes are cast again and again." It was he who had taught her, "Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return, and the heart rejoices to be at one another's side."

Now, she truly was in a state where beauty had been offered, a soul had been given in return, and love had bewitched her mind.

[1]小南辰王 "Xiao Nan Chen Wang." I am going to keep this mostly in pinyin and translate his title as Xiao Nanchen Prince. The 小 means "little" and is likely referring to the young age at which he inherited the title of Nanchen Prince or his status as the youngest uncle of the crown prince and youngest prince of the previous generation. 南 "nan" means "south." I believe 辰 "chen" is referring to 星辰 "xing chen" or "stars." Hence, "Xiao Nanchen Prince" could also be thought of as "Little 'Stars of the Southern Sky' Prince". I ended up keeping his title in pinyin because it just felt awkward using the English version.

[2] He did not call himself 为师 "wei shi", which means "your teacher" or "as your teacher." This self-address that a teacher would use when speaking to his disciple, although it establishes the relationship, is in a way also distancing himself from his disciples by clearly laying out his status. Using "I" to address himself is less formal, is friendlier, and gives a closeness to the relationship.

[3] 师兄姐 “shi xiong jie.” Technically, it should be translated as senior male/female fellow student. However, 兄 means “older brother” and 姐 means “older sister” and especially in ancient times where discipleship like this in some sense, carried a connotation of being like a family under the same teacher, so I have kept it simple and just translated this as “senior brother” and “senior sister.”

[4] 上林赋 “Shanglin Fu.” Ancient poem/rhapsody from the Han dynasty, written by the poet, Sima Xiangru. This is the rhapsody that the line, “Beauty is offered...” comes from. The title has been translated by some scholars as “Rhapsody of the Imperial Park”, and that is what I’ll use in the translation. (Again, here is the [link](#) to a full translation, although I will not be following it.) Shanglin was the imperial hunting grounds and park of the Han dynasty.

[5] 美人骨 ‘mei ren gu.’ The literal translation is “bones of a beauty” and represents the character of one who possesses true beauty. I will translate this as “beautiful bones.” Therefore, the “skin” and “bones” in this line refer to outer and inner beauty, respectively.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

17 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Insert Chapter 1.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Insert Chapter 1.2

[May 13, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [62 Comments](#)



Between Mother's Day and packing, I was only able to get this chapter ready ahead of time, so unfortunately, I will have to miss Friday night's post. Back from holidays in a week.

The girl in the cover pic is Eleven, and it was drawn by Mo Bao Fei Bao herself.

I need a shoulder to cry on.

Insert Chapter 1.2 – Beautiful Bones (2)

Late into the night, she wrote a letter, pleading to her mother to break off her betrothal.

Mother sent a letter in reply. Not a single word mentioned breaking the betrothal, and instead, what she spoke of was some of the rumors that were circulating among the ordinary people.

A rumor amongst the common folk was that Xiao Nanchen Prince and the crown princess had illicit relations, paying no heed to their relationship as teacher and disciple and disregarding ethics and social order^[1]. A rumor amongst the common folk was that Xiao Nanchen Prince had intentions of raising an army to change the ruling surname and declaring his sovereignty. Another rumor amongst the common folk was that the Cui family of Qinghe had already joined with Xiao Nanchen Prince's manor, offering up both its beautiful daughter and the world for the purpose of being granted a division of the land so that the family clan would be made a line of kings.

My child, guard your words and your actions. The entire family line in Qinghe is held in your hands.

She folded the letter, removed the glass cover protecting the candle of the lamp, and placed the letter in the flame until it had completely burned away.

Imperial edicts from the palace expressing goodwill were frequently received, and the crown prince, as the heir apparent to the throne, personally visited the manor and sought to appease Xiao Nanchen Prince. The lord and his ministers were so harmonious in their relationship, as if to proclaim to the world that the rumors were strictly rumors and that the relationship between the imperial household, the line of the Nanchen Prince, and the Cui family of Qinghe was close, strong, and unshakable.

On her seventeenth birthday, by her mother's orders, she was to leave Xiao Nanchen Prince's Manor and this city, Chang'an that she had lived in for ten years, yet had never once seen the bustling of its streets and marketplace.

That day was also a brilliantly sunny day.

It was a seldom seen time when Teacher was in the manor with no matters to attend to, and he was sitting and leaning back in the bamboo chair in the study. When she entered to bid her farewell, sunlight was shining in through the window, casting blotchy shadows upon him and causing him to be partly in the

light, partly in the dark. His eyes were clear like water as he raised his head and quietly gazed right at her.

Eleven very carefully and properly paid the ceremonial respect of a disciple to her teacher, kneeling down on both knees and pressing her forehead against the bluestone slabs of the floor. "One who is teacher for one day is regarded as father for a lifetime[2]." Her bow was to bid farewell to these ten years of his loving kindness, raising and teaching her.

"The empress dowager has issued a decree that I adopt you as my daughter. Eleven, would you be willing to have this pass?"

She rose back to her feet and very gently shook her head.

That bow from a moment ago had already concluded their relationship as teacher and disciple. She did not want to still have anything binding her to him after she stepped out of the prince's manor.

He gave a small smile. "Then this prince[3] shall, for this once, defy the decree."

Eleven walked up before him, and leaning up against the side of the bamboo chair, she bent her knees slightly. She looked carefully at him. There was a touch of weariness between his brows. Unconsciously, she reached out her hand, wanting to touch his face.

Just this one time. After this one time, she would leave Chang'an and return to Qinghe.

He sensed her motion and raised his eyes a little to look directly at her. She was frightened, not knowing whether she should pull her hand back or forthrightly touch his face. In that brief, still moment, he had already leaned forward slightly and, complementing her action, placed his face gently into her hand.

Her fingers had a slight tremble, but they still stubbornly held their course and slid from his brow down the bridge of his nose.

Beautiful bones.

She thought, what about these bones was so special that even the imperial

household would be wary of them, that they would be on the lips of everyone in the land?

Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return. This was describing a woman offering up her beauty and a man giving his soul in return, but with her plain, unremarkable appearance, how could she possibly merit the words, “beauty is offered”?..... She quietly pulled her hand back. He suddenly gave a little laugh and asked her, “You have been in Chang’an for ten years, but Eleven, you still have not seen the true Chang’an city, have you?” Eleven nodded, and after thinking about it, she could not refrain from giving a rueful smile.

“I will bring you for a look.”

She was taken aback, but when she remembered her mother’s letter, she hesitantly shook her head. Only after he had ordered someone to bring her a hat with a black gauze covering and her entire face was hidden, with only her eyes showing, did he finally take her out of the prince’s manor. Under the bright sun shining high in the sky, in the noisy streets, he and she rode together on a single horse as he softly told her the name of every place and explained what was unique about each of them.

The places where his long whip was present should have been battlefields of life and death, of fighting and killing.

But that day, it was merely there in Chang’an city’s pavilions, terraces, towers, wine shops, and streets. He did not wear his princely robes, and she was covering her face. He was no longer her teacher, and she was no longer his disciple. From a distance, all that anyone could see was simply a girl, with bright, limpid eyes, sitting on the horse and the extremely graceful, poised man who held her in his arms in front of himself.

This was the city of Chang’an where she had lived for ten years.



Ancient Zhousheng Chen taking Eleven for a final ride through Chang'an before she was to leave. Drawing was done by a Chinese online artist for this specific scene from the novel.

The day she left the prince's manor was also the day he once again led troops out into battle against enemy armies. After ten years of wars and fighting, the border areas had been purged of threats, and neighbouring countries were terror-stricken by simply word of his presence. This battle was merely a warning to all the lands and did not have any risk to his life.

She believed as such.

Ten days later, she arrived at the ancestral manor of the Cui family of Qinghe, and under the personal tutelage of the crown prince's childhood wet nurse, she began to learn wedding etiquette and rituals. The wet nurse seemed to have heard much about her various errors and wrongdoings, and her words and

countenance were harsh, deliberately finding fault in every aspect. In silence, she remembered each important point and disregarded the mockery and scorn in her words.

Until an emergency request for aid came from the borderlands.

His Imperial Highness, the crown prince, personally went out to battle, bringing reinforcement troops to Xiao Nanchen Prince. It was then that she felt that there was something amiss.

From the time Xiao Nanchen Prince was sixteen years of age and had mounted his horse to enter the battlefield, he had never once been defeated. Where his sword pointed would surely be a billowing sea of blood, and he would unquestionably return in triumph. What virtues or abilities could a crown prince, who had spent all his days in rest in the imperial palace, possibly have that he would dare to lead the reinforcements out to battle?

There was no one for her to pose her questions to, for the people surrounding her were either her father and brothers or were those belonging to the imperial family.

She remembered, in her ten years in the prince's manor, if she had fallen asleep, Zhousheng Chen would always carry her back to her room himself, for fear that she would be affected by cold and fall ill. With even the slightest sickness due to invasion of wind-cold[\[4\]](#) in her body, she would be in his room drinking a tea brewed from purple perilla leaf. In contrast, now that she had returned home, even on days when snow was falling thickly, she would still need to stand barefoot on the bluestone tile floors and learn how to climb onto the daybed to wait upon the monarch.

Half a month later, Mother came to watch her as she practiced over and over again the proper movements and posture for seating oneself.

After a long while, Mother finally wordlessly handed her a note.

The words were few and the handwriting seeming as if it had been hastily composed, but so familiar it caused her heart to pound in fear.

Chen, in this life, never forsook the world and has only forsaken Eleven.

In her bare feet, she stood on the bluestone tiles and listened to her mother, one word, one sentence at a time, describe to her how, on that night three days ago, Xiao Nanchen Prince had, just before the battle, turned in rebellion and seized the crown prince in a futile attempt to usurp the throne and become emperor himself. Fortunately, Shi Yi's father and elder brothers were present and protected his Imperial Highness. The nearly successful rebellion finally failed, and Xiao Nanchen Prince was granted the punishment of death by deboning.

What was meant by deboning? It was for the lone reason that his beautiful bones were widely known in the land.

The crown prince, therefore, before all the people of the land, scraped out the beautiful bones from his body to serve as an example and warning to the people.

Mother's eyes avoided hers. Her eyes wide, she fixed her gaze upon her mother.

Her mouth opened, but words would not come forth.

This life, she possessed a mouth and tongue but yet was unable to produce speech. She was not even able to ask how he had left this note behind.

Who had forsaken whom?

As Eleven held that piece of paper, she could not prevent her body from trembling. She remembered how, that day, before she had departed, her fingers had felt over every feature of his face, not wanting to forget even the smallest detail about him. But now, what remained in this reunion was merely paper and final words written before death.

His one statement that he had never forsaken the world was clearly telling her he had been set-up and the accusations against him were falsified.

Her father and elder brothers had wronged him, the imperial family had

wronged him.

As for her, how could she remove herself from this matter?

Eleven carefully folded up the note and placed it inside her garment collar, beside her heart. She then continued to silently practice, over and over again, how to sit down properly.

Eleven, in this life, did you ever have someone whom you would like to be with, to share that person's ending?

The answer to this question, she had known already long ago.

Historical records stated:

Zhousheng Chen, the Xiao Nanchen Prince — a life of unceasing fighting and war, exemplary of whole-hearted loyalty, but in the prime of his life, was marred by fame and glory and gradually developed desires to rebel against the state. The Cui family of Qinghe, fortunately, saw through and thwarted his scheme. Xiao Nanchen Prince was captured. The crown prince's hatred ran deep into his bones, and he bestowed the punishment of death by deboning upon him.

The sentence was carried out for a full three shichen [six hours][\[5\]](#), but there was not a single cry or howl of anguish. Even to death, he refused to repent.

Throughout his life, Xiao Nanchen Prince took no wife and had no offspring, but repeated allegations of his secret, illicit relationship with the crown princess were circulated. Four days after Xiao Nanchen Prince's death, the crown princess also departed this life. There were rumors that she had hung herself from the rafters of one of the ten zhang [approximately 32 metres][\[6\]](#) tall towers in the prince's manor, while other accounts said she had thrown herself from the city walls of Chang'an. Opinions differed and there were no conclusive arguments. All that remained, within the library tower of the prince's manor, was the crown princess's writing, written with her own hand the entire poem of "Rhapsody of the Imperial Park." This story was passed down the ages until it

became one praised and passed on by the people.

His life of magnificence, of greatness was, with these few words, completely buried and forgotten by the world.

In this life, twenty-six years had passed already.

Shi Yi leaned against the window, looking out beyond the car window at the street signs that were speeding by. She could not help giving a heartfelt sigh over the good weather. There was not even a trace of a cloud in the azure sky, so even one's mood was pleasant because of this. The taxi cab's whole journey had been flowing and unimpeded, and even after she was out of the car, her check-in procedure was smooth. However, inside security, both times she passed through the metal detector, the alarm had sounded loudly.

The most frustrating part was, the alarm over in the other security line next to her was blaring incessantly as well. She wondered who was having the same wretched luck as her and had encountered an unreasonable metal detector. "Miss, would you mind taking off your shoes. We need to check again." She nodded and sat down on one of the chairs off to the side. As she was lowering her head to remove her shoes, she saw the backside view of the man in the adjacent security checkpoint.

Very tall, his back very straight. When she noticed him, he was picking up his laptop computer.

On the other end of the security checkpoint, the long queue wound back like dragon.

And on this end, it was only the two of them being inspected.

"Mr. Zhousheng Chen?" The man guarding the security checkpoint was holding the passport he had left behind. "You forgot your passport."

"Thank you." He turned around.

Sensing her gaze on him, he lifted his eyes to look over at her.

That instant of eye contact seemed to suppress all the chaos and noise surrounding them. Nothing else concerned her anymore. Shi Yi stared deeply at him, unable to move her gaze away. She wanted to laugh and at the same time, wanted to cry, but either way, she could not speak, not even half a word.

He had come after all.

Zhousheng Chen, you have come after all.

[1] 纲常伦理 “gang chang lun li.” 纲常 “gang chang” is the simplified name for 三纲五常, the Three “Gang” [Mainstays] and Five Chang [Norms]. 伦理 “lun li” is referring basically to the principles behind the “five norms.” The “three mainstays” are the three relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife. The “five norms” are these previous three relationships as well as the relationship between brothers and friends. The principle behind this is that proper social order is maintained only when these relationships are carried out appropriately in society. In Eleven and Xiao Nanchen Prince’s case, the relationship between “father and son” is what applies to them. (see footnote [2])

[2] 一日为师, 终身是父. An idiom meaning, even if a person has only taught me for a one day, I shall regard him as a father for the rest of my life. This is to show the degree of respect one’s teacher deserves in one’s life. However, it is also regarded that your teacher is your elder, and a teacher and student/disciple should never be in a romantic relationship because it violates the natural order that one you should not be in relationship with your “father”/elder.

[3] 本王 ‘ben wang’. A form of self-address that means, “this prince.” In front of subordinates, this is how a prince of Zhousheng Chen’s status should address himself. It is more formal as his status is being stated plainly and separates himself from those below him. In this case, the formality is being used because he, as the Xiao Nanchen Prince, will, for Eleven, defy an imperial decree, something that he, a man loyal to his ruler, has never done before.

[4] 风寒 “feng han.” In traditional Chinese medicine, there are six climatic “evils” that can enter and are detrimental to the body. “Wind” and “coldness”

are two of them. These climatic evils can act in combination. Wind-cold is when external “wind” is accompanied with “coldness.”

[5] 时辰 “shi chen.” Historically, a day was divided up into 12 two-hour periods called “shichen.” Zhousheng Chen’s punishment was carried out for three shichen, or 6 hours.

[6] 丈 “zhang.” A Chinese unit of length. The exact measure of a “zhang” has changed throughout history. In the 20th century, it was standardized so that 1 zhang = 3.33 metres, but prior to this, it ranged anywhere from between 2.3 to 3.6 metres. (No historical era has been specified for the ancient parts of this story, and ancient Zhousheng Chen and all his “history” is definitely fictional. You can probably make the assumption that 1 zhang is approximately 3-ish metres and the aforementioned tower is 30-ish metres tall.)

Additional Comments:

Anyone catch the couple of parallels of the ancient life to the modern times? I love the details...

There were a few comments last update about being hesitant about Eleven and ancient Zhousheng Chen’s relationship in that it was the forbidden romance between teacher and student. So, now that you have had a glimpse of their lives in the ancient times, what do you think of their relationship?

I would not use “romance” to describe their relationship. I don’t feel that their relationship is like one of those relationships often portrayed in dramas where the two are with great difficulty suppressing their feelings for one another, which may be sometimes ignited by an unintended brush of fingers or something along those lines. This brief glimpse of their past life is for us to have insight into the man that ancient Zhousheng Chen was, how his bones were truly beautiful. Shi Yi’s love for him was not simply because he was the teacher who cared for her when she was alienated from everyone and was something much more than the heart-racing feeling a young girl gets for the man she likes. She had a deep, heartfelt respect for him and despite having never left the prince’s manor, knew

how great a man he was, how his heart was bigger than just the romantic love between a man and a woman.

I had mentioned that “beauty is offered, a soul is given in return” also describes a love in which no words are needed to express it for it is mutually understood. How appropriate that is for a mute Eleven and for them. Their love for one another would forever be mute, never to be expressed or even thought upon, because she was the crown princess, he was her teacher; it was never to be. They knew of the other’s love, as evidenced by Zhousheng Chen’s final note to Eleven, but it would forever stay only in their eyes and never be spoken, not a passionate, doe-eyed look of forbidden love but one of mutual understanding.

Love without an outlet can go nowhere but become deeper and deeper, and when Eleven realized it was her family’s treachery that had brought about his death, how could she remove herself from the guilt?

That last historical account of Xiao Nanchen Prince’s life makes my heart ache every time. The unfeeling words of the history books stating the “facts” — committed treason, allegedly had an affair with the crown princess — is more callous than outright rebuking him, for it so coldly writes off his entire life of loyalty, military achievements, dedication to the people and country, and all his talents. And then, when you begin truly reading into the words and imagining his hours of torture and people on the streets rebuking him...

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

18 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 6.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 6.1

[May 20, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [55 Comments](#)



Thank you for all the lovely wishes. I had an awesome vacation.

Happy 520! May 20 (the 5th month and its 20th day) is referred to in China as 520. 520 (five-two-zero) in Mandarin is pronounced “wǔ èr líng”, which sounds similar to 我爱你 “wǒ ài nǐ” or “I love you.” Hence, May 20th is also the day of love confessions in China. Anyone you want to confess your love to?

Welcome back to the modern times. After a rather sad chapter last week, this one should heal your heart. What will our two leads do in honour of this special 520 posting day? ;) You are welcome to put on a grin along with me. ♥

Chapter 6.1 – Beauty is Offered, but Whose Soul is Given? (1)

Shi Yi counted down the days, one by one. She was somewhat nervous and asked him whether she needed to meet the other members of the Zhou family ahead of time. Zhousheng Chen turned down this suggestion in a very simple

fashion. His exact words were, “There is no need to meet them in advance. At most three years, and then I will return to the normal trajectory of my life. You should do the same. There is no need to change anything.”

She knew, by “normal trajectory,” he meant it would be like the him in the Xi’an research institute.

The one who wore a white laboratory coat and led a team of researchers to study materials that she would never understand.

Even though she was about to be engaged, she still needed to participate in several events that were within the scope of her work.

For example, all the voice actors of East Media were required to participate in a singing program that was being recorded as a perk for the listeners. These voice actors did not often open their mouths to sing, but if they were to step into a recording studio and musical accompaniment were to start playing, their singing would almost certainly amaze the overwhelming majority of listeners. As a result, since the first installment three years ago, this had become an annual event that occurred every May.

She did not even have the opportunity to request time off.

By the time Uncle Lin had driven her to the recording studio, there were already many people there waiting. Some were standing while others were sitting, all of them dressed casually, and they laughed and chatted amongst each other. When Shi Yi pushed open the door and entered the room, two middle-aged women laughed and joked, “Hey, look! The one who won the this year’s ‘Best Sounding Voice’ has arrived.” They were both seniors in the voice acting industry and would frequently tease her. She heaved a sigh and jokingly as well, bowed deeply towards them and said, “Seniors, your junior has transgressed and won this year’s award. My bad, my bad.”

Everyone guffawed.

That was the nice thing about voice actors. They did not show their faces, and their reputations and the knowledge of their names were limited to within the industry. As a result, they were generally people who were indifferent to fame

and fortune. Shi Yi was pretty, her disposition was kind and polite, and she was very respectful to the more seasoned seniors of the industry, so naturally, she was very well liked.

She walked over and out of habit, sought out Mei Lin to ask for the script.

However, the latter only stood there, hands folded across her chest, and said very embarrassedly, “This year, the rules have changed. The boss said, we need to learn from Good Voices and have you guys record the thing that you do best. We will have a competition out in the public eye.”

“Really?” Shi Yi looked around at everyone and discovered that their hands really were not holding any papers.

“Really,” Mei Lin laughed, and then in a lowered voice, asked, “Should we use your face for the poster?”

Shi Yi gave her a hard jab with her elbow.

Mei Lin whispered to her, “I’ll tell you something: Wang Yingdong is here today.”

Wang Yingdong. D. Wang. A very low profile and extremely talented producer. Most importantly, he had liked Shi Yi for a long time now, so long that everybody knew about his feelings, but yet he had never once told her directly. Shi Yi was not slow-witted, but given that they belonged to the same company, she more or less would still need to have some contact with him. She had already asked Mei Lin to, as much as possible, arrange for all her work to avoid interactions with him, but for this type of big project, she could not evade it.

Her brows came together in a slight frown, and she did not speak.

If possible, she hoped that this life would be simple and straightforward.

Besides Zhousheng Chen, she did not want to have any connection whatsoever with anyone else.

Fortunately, they were all sitting together in the lounge.

Besides being able to hear Wang Yingdong’s voice when recording inside the live room, there would otherwise be no interaction with him.

According to Mei Lin, the format had indeed changed this year. Every person was required to recite a quote spoken by a character of some sort. Furthermore, in order to capture a variety of entertaining and funny tidbits, they truly were not to be given any prompts or hint. When each of them stepped into the live room, the background music of a song, chosen at random and to which they would have to sing along with, would be played. It was fortunate the songs were all formerly popular ones and only a small number of people were unable to sing along with theirs.

However, a few who specialized in doing the voiceover for documentaries truly did not listen to popular music, and these people simply ended up having to have the song played several times while the recording was occurring and learning it on the spot.

When Shi Yi was pushed into the room, Wang Yingdong did not make things difficult for her.

The lines chosen for her were ones that she was most familiar with, and the song was one that she had heard many times and knew well.

“Wo De Ge Sheng Li” [You Exist Within My Song].

A song that had been sung in all streets and alleyways and was so hugely popular because of its performance on a talent show^[1]. She put on her headset and saw, on the other side of the glass, D. Wang, who was also wearing a black headset, give her a thumbs-up, his signature gesture that indicated she should get ready.

The music came on, and she hummed softly for a little bit along with the melody line.



Very simple lyrics.

Each line summoned up many thoughts.

*“[0:17] Not the least bit prepared,
Nor the least bit apprehensive,
And then you appeared just like that in my world.....*

.....

*[0:45] You exist deep within my mind
Within my dreams, within my heart
Within my song.....”*

She still remembered when he had suddenly appeared. They had both been taking an early flight, so there had not been many people in the airport. And it was fortunate that there had not been many, for otherwise, he would have even more so felt she was being rude and obtrusive. Every expression of his had been very vivid to her. For instance, he had turned toward his left to look back, and in his hands, besides a computer, passport, and boarding pass, he had not been carrying any other unnecessary items.

He wore a light blue and yellow, checkered dress shirt, and his eyes had an untainted sense.

When his gaze landed on her, he had not shown any superfluous emotion, but that had only served to make the expression in her eyes appear even more flustered.

With one hand resting on the metal microphone stand, Shi Yi sang softly. Never before had she been so immersed in a song as she sang.

Through the glass, only D. Wang and Mei Lin were watching her.

Both of them seemed to perceive that she was singing for someone with feelings that were not tainted by anything. D. Wang slowly lowered the volume of the music until she was nearly singing a capella. He thought, this woman, who was one of the “Top Four Female Voices in Mainland China” and who had just received an important award, perhaps was truly dating someone in a secret, romantic relationship. The media gossip from that night’s award ceremony had led him to believe that Shi Yi’s pure, firm values had started to wane, but tonight, her singing was clearly conveying that right now, she was very much in love with a man.

Regardless of how much that man’s wealth might be, she had genuinely invested her feelings into this relationship.

She finished recording her part and then very quickly left.

She, therefore, was unaware of how the rest of the people inside the recording studio were teasing D. Wang. Someone gently patted D. Wang’s shoulder and grinned, “East Media’s prettiest girl seems to have found a significant other who is really quite good.”

D. Wang lightly tapped the worktable with two fingers and did not say anything. Instead, he laughed rather resignedly. “As long as she likes him, then there is nothing more important than that.”

This strict, demanding producer unexpectedly said such touching words. The entire room fell into a rare moment of quietness.

When she arrived downstairs, Zhousheng Chen was already waiting by the roadside for her.

Shi Yi presumed that he must have kept to his usual practice of arriving fifteen minutes early. It was nearly the rainy summer season, and the roads at night would often become dampened by a sudden drizzle. A few green leaves from Chinese parasol or ginkgo trees would become stuck to the road surface, and the soft, spongy feeling when stepping on them would give the illusion that you could sink into them. Shi Yi walked up beside him. "Have you taken the teachers back to the hotel?"

Zhousheng Chen nodded. "They were back an hour ago."

"An hour?" She calculated out the time and distance. "How long have you been here?"

"Thirty minutes."

"Thirty minutes?" She laughed, "Didn't you say your practice, when you wait for someone, is to be fifteen minutes early?"

He opened the car door for her and casually answered, "If it is to wait for my fiancée, doubling that waiting time would not be considered excessive."

She had not expected him to say that. As she took a seat in the vehicle, she noticed Uncle Lin seemed to be smiling.

The car turned a corner and drove steadily onto the main road that was lit up as bright as day by the streetlights. Shi Yi saw him open the window down one quarter of the way, just enough to allow fresh air to flow in freely but not so much that wind would tousle the hair. A wooden armrest was between the two of them, but he did not place his arm on it and left it for her to use instead.

She suddenly noticed these tiny, insignificant details.

Perhaps he had always been like this when he was with her.

Even though love was something that was to be gradually fostered, he had truly done all that was required to be done — setting aside time to spend with her, as well as giving her space and freedom and not allowing the many

complicated family rules to become shackles on her, despite the fact that these rules were not easily broken, something she had become aware of in that one and only time she had met his mother.

She very lightly bumped his arm with her hand.

Zhousheng Chen turned his head to look at her.

Shi Yi subtly pointed at the front seat. He understood and closed the soundproof glass partition between the front and back compartments.

“In your family, when you get engaged, are there any specific things that must be done?” she asked him.

Zhousheng Chen thought about it carefully. “Nothing in particular. Anything that could be omitted, I have already left out.”

“Then, will we need to put on a ring?”

He smiled, “Yes.”

“Then, after putting on the ring,” she looked into his deep black eyes and asked, “do you need to kiss your fiancée?”

Zhousheng Chen was a little taken aback by this, but he still thought over the question carefully. “This... they did not inform me.”

A hint of laughter could be heard in his voice.

Shi Yi supposed, he might perhaps have generally understood what she was trying to say.

But, yet he also seemed like he did not understand.

“Come a little closer,” she told him in a low voice.

He was very obedient and gently leaned closer toward her, the look on his face still appearing somewhat puzzled.

Blushing, she asked lightly, “If you asked for these details, would people feel awkward?”

He pondered briefly, then answered, “Perhaps.”

She did not know what else she could say, and Zhousheng Chen merely politely and quietly waited.

When they were sitting, he was still quite a bit taller than her and had to lower his head to speak to her. So close, so beguiling.

If she did not do it now, she might not have the courage again tonight to do it at all.

Shi Yi suddenly closed her eyes and brought her face up toward him. In that instant, when their lips made contact, she could not separate whether this was the past life or the present one. This type of feeling made her unable to breathe, afraid to move, and scared to open her eyes.

There was only the furious beating of her heart, like a drum, as she grasped tightly to the wooden armrest between them.

In that brief moment of stillness, she could even feel on her his eyes that were right there before her. She squeezed her own eyes shut even tighter so that even her eyelashes were quivering slightly, but stubbornly, she refused to pull away. Fortunately, he very quickly started to softly and tenderly return her kiss, instinctively using the tip of his tongue to gently part her lips and teeth and overturning his previously passive stance to now take the lead.

And his hand lightly enclosed hers, engulfing it in his palm.

His palm was warm. His grip was not forceful.

Lips and tongues pressed up against one another. This sort of distance was something she had once not even dared to imagine. He was not rushed, and there even seemed to be the sense that he was being patient and paying careful attention to the details as he kissed her. Inch by inch, bit by bit he seemed to draw away her consciousness and ability to think. She was reluctant to leave his touch, and he did not have any intention of letting her go either. And so, over and over, they carried on like this for a long while.

At last, when he finally left her lips, he gently kissed her on her cheek.



Wordlessly, they pulled away from one another.

He seemed to want to say something, but in the end, he simply smiled.

Shi Yi dared not look at him again and very swiftly turned her head away to stare out the window at the passing scenery.

Their vehicle was still traveling onward steadily. Buildings were continuously disappearing off into the distance, and lights were coming unendingly towards them. If they could just continue driving, continue looking out like this at everything along the way, how wonderful that would be.

[1] This song, called 我的歌声里 “Wo De Ge Sheng Li” or “You Exist in My Song” was composed, arranged, and sung originally by 曲婉婷 Qu Wan Ting (Wanting Qu). However, it was not very well known until 李代沫 Li Dai Mo, as a contestant on the talent show, 中国好声音 “The Voice of China”, sang it. [His performance](#) brought the song to the attention of the general audience and caused it to skyrocket in popularity.

Additional Comments:

Not surprising that their first kiss would be initiated by Shi Yi, was it? The kiss was sigh-worthy, but there were so many other little details in this chapter that I loved — Shi Yi’s resolve to keep her relationships clear-cut and not give hope to any person, Zhousheng Chen willing to wait extra long for Shi Yi, his attentiveness with the window and armrest, and his geekiness as he seemed to

study the details of the kiss. <3

For a moment, this felt like a *Really, Really Miss You* update, from cover pic of the girl with the headset to the song translation, below. Pop songs are so much easier to translate than ancient-style ones, though.

Random piece of information: the talent show contestant, Li Dai Mo went on to make an [MV of his version](#) of the song and ended up being sued as he had allegedly not asked for permission before doing so. I much prefer his version to the [original](#) sung by Qu Wan Ting.

The Youtube video I inserted is not the original rendition. With the huge popularity of this song, you'll find many different covers of it. This particular cover is by 云の泣, an online/2-D world singer. I find 云の泣's voice suits the sweeter, gentler tone I imagine Shi Yi's voice to have as opposed to Qu Wan Ting's huskier voice with the sharper enunciation.

我的歌声里

You Exist in My Song

[0:17] 没有一点点防备

Not the least bit prepared

也没有一丝顾虑

Nor the least bit apprehensive

[0:20] 你就这样出现在我的世界里

And then you appeared just like that in my world

[0:25] 带给我惊喜 情不自己

Bringing me a pleasant surprise I simply could not resist

[0:31] 可是你偏又这样

But just like that

在我不知不觉中 悄悄地消失

When I was completely unaware, you quietly disappeared

[0:37] 从我的世界里没有音讯

From my world, without any word

[0:40] 剩下的只是回忆

And what remained were merely memories

[0:45] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[0:50] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[0:54] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[0:59] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[1:05] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[1:08] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[1:13] 还记得我们曾经

I still remember we once

肩并肩一起走过

Walked side by side past

那段繁华巷口

That bustling alley

[1:18] 尽管你我是陌生人 是过路人

Even though we were just strangers, merely passersby to one another

[1:23] 但彼此还是感觉到了对方的

But we could still feel the other person's

[1:27] 一个眼神 一个心跳

Every single glance, every single heartbeat

一种意想不到的快乐

An unexpected sense of happiness

[1:36] 好像是

As if it was

[1:37] 一场梦境 命中注定

A dream, something that was destined

[1:44] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[1:50] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[1:54] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[1:58] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[2:04] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[2:08] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[2:12] 世界之大 为何我们相遇

In such a vast world, why did we meet?

[2:18] 难道是缘分

Could it have been fate?

[2:22] 难道是天意

Could it have been destiny?

[2:30] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[2:36] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[2:39] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[2:44] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[2:50] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[2:53] 我的歌声里

Within my song

[2:58] 你存在 我深深的脑海里

You exist deep within my mind

[3:04] 我的梦里 我的心里

Within my dreams, within my heart

[3:08] 我的歌声里

Within my song

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

19 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 6.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 6.2

[May 23, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [33 Comments](#)



Mo Bao Fei Bao is such a foodie. Researching her dishes takes as long as looking up all her historical and literary references. Anyone ever eaten camel?

Chapter 6.2 – Beauty is Offered, but Whose Soul is Given? (2)

When she was home, she moved a chair and set it in front of the floor to ceiling glass doors of the balcony.

From here, she had a view of an overpass not far away, where the cars on it moved like flowing water.

She sat there for a long time.

She suddenly wanted to completely piece together the memories of her past life, how she and Zhousheng Chen had met, how they had come to know and deeply understand one another, and how it had all ended. But what had been

clear images in her mind when she was child was now like a montage.

Images juxtaposed and superimposed upon one another. Countless fragmented memories.

She could only remember those past segments, so unimaginably beautiful, where they were in each other's presence.

And she remembered that it must have been her who wronged him.

What was the ending of the story? Perhaps because it was too saddening, she truly had forgotten.

A stark white light suddenly lit up in that dark room. It was so late, yet he was calling.

With a rather fluttery heartbeat, she picked up her phone, and at the same time, felt an inexplicable worry. Normally, after he had escorted her home, he would not call again because they had already exchanged their good nights at the door.

She brought her mobile phone up against her cheek and answered it with a "hello."

Zhousheng Chen's voice was placid. "You have not gone to sleep yet?"

"Me?" Shi Yi was not sure the reason but since that kiss tonight, when she heard his voice, she felt somewhat flustered. "Mm-hmm. I'm sitting in the living room."

He was silent for a moment.

She did not know what he wanted to say, but in the end, he did not say anything.

He merely bid her good night.

Shi Yi softly uttered a "good night" to him as well.

After Zhousheng Chen had hung up the call, Uncle Lin, who was seated in the front seat, asked in a low voice, "Shall we go back now?" He nodded. Downstairs

of the apartment building, the car slowly pulled out of the community compound and drove towards the overpass.

Earlier, he had been watching and saw that the lights had still not turned on in her room, which was not at all like her usual routine. Based on her normal habits, she would usually go to her room first, and then approximately ten minutes later, she would take a shower. Today, however, even after a long while, she did not do so. So long was it that he suddenly felt a little worried whether something may have happened.

And as for making that phone call, there was also another reason for it.

On such a special night, should he not say something to her?

What should he say? In the end, when the call was answered, he realized that he did not need to say another word.

He could hear, from within the phone, her breathing was consciously being curtailed and was extremely different from normal. Zhousheng Chen placed his elbow against the side of the window and, using his fingers against his face to support his head's weight, his gaze fell on the night scene outside.

After a little while, he could not constrain the corners of his lips from turning up in a slight smile.

Three days in advance, she went with him back to the old manor in Zhenjiang.

Her parents would arrive one day later.

Shi Yi was filled with uneasiness throughout the journey there, fearful of seeing his mother again or even his extended family members. As they drove further in on the mountain road, she noticed that their sedan had driven by but did not stop at that place she had once visited. Instead, they proceeded deeper into that richly green and tranquil forest. Eventually, tall, decorated stone archways started appearing in their vision and the trees on each side of the road were even more towering.



石雕牌坊 “shi diao pai fang” –
decorated, stone archway

Alongside the road, on the left, the babbling sound of a brook could be heard, while on the right were steps of bluestone.

She looked out upon the scenery beside the road, wondering what this place was.

Shortly after, two or three girls, who seemed to be chatting casually, could be seen walking leisurely up the stone steps. When the sedan drove by them, the girls suddenly turned their heads to look. One of them recognized the vehicle and hastily waved after it. “Big Brother.”

Her voice echoed slightly against the mountain valley.

The sedan slowly came to a halt, and Zhousheng Chen stepped out. The girl wanted to run over, yet did not dare actually break out into a run and only hurried over to him along the nearest gravel pathway. When she was near, Zhousheng Chen reached out his hand and gently touched her face. “You’re perspiring. You came down from the mountain?”

The girl answered with a quick “mm” and then with a grin, she skirted around him and walked right up to Shi Yi. “Miss Shi Yi, hi. I’m Zhou Wenxing, your future little sister.”

She glanced over briefly at Zhousheng Chen and was able to deduce that this was the younger sister he loved dearly.

So far, she had seen four family members in his generation. Sure enough, just as he had said, besides him and Zhousheng Ren who were unique, everyone else

contained the character “Wen” within their name as their generation name^[1]. All the names were the same, following that naming convention, regardless of whether the person was a close or distant relative, within the direct or a collateral line.

Zhousheng Chen appeared to be worried about his sister’s health and insisted that she get into the car and not climb or exert herself anymore.

Contrary to expectations, Zhou Wenxing actually was delighted with this and waved the other two young kinswomen over to join her. Taking the liberty of shutting the car door, she called out, “Big Brother, why don’t you walk up with Miss Shi Yi. Hope you can make it there by lunchtime.” As she urged Uncle Lin to hurry and begin driving, she suddenly added, “Oh right, today you’re supposed to try some dishes. By all means, you can’t be late.”

Soon, the car had driven away, turned along the winding road that circled the mountain, and disappeared from view.

She felt as if, right this moment, she had entered an uninhabited landscape of beautiful scenery.

There were no vehicles or other forms of traffic. There was only her and him.

With a hint of resignation in his smile, Zhousheng Chen said, “There is still quite a ways to go.”

“It’s alright.” She had already started leisurely walking along. “The scenery here is really nice, so I shouldn’t really feel tired as I walk.”

He raised his arm to look at his watch. “Based on your current speed, it will likely take approximately fifty to sixty minutes.”

Her footsteps paused. “Your little sister said you need to try some dishes today at lunch?”

Zhousheng Chen nodded, then removed his suit jacket and draped it over one arm, evidently having already prepared himself for walking up the mountain.

It was already approaching lunchtime now. If they still needed to walk for another hour, that meant they would be keeping all the elders waiting. Realizing

this, Shi Yi did not dare tarry any longer. Grabbing his wrist and tugging on it, she told him, "I can walk really fast, extremely fast."

Only after her hand had enclosed his wrist did she become aware that this act was actually a form of intimacy.

Zhousheng Chen, however, did not think anything of it. He merely gently pulled off her hand off and then took it into his own. "You do not need to walk too quickly. They will wait for us the whole time." Since they were walking upslope, he would be leading her and helping her along, so naturally, his hold on her hand was a little tighter than normal.

At first, her attention was focused on the anxiousness she was feeling, but after walking uphill for twenty minutes, she was already slightly breathless.

When the two of them reached the doors of an old manor, her forehead was already damp with perspiration.

"Tired?" He let go of her.

Shi Yi smiled faintly.

As before, it was a large traditional manor house, but it did seem to give a slightly warmer feeling than the previous old manor. When she thought about that place, she still pictured it with a continuous falling drizzle, where the old-style tile on the ground was wet and the pavilions, terraces and towers were all shrouded by a curtain of rain. Even his mother's tone of voice was dull and dreary.

But this place seemed like it was brimming with sunshine.

The manor was very deep, and she could not even count how many courtyards deep it was. The façade was richly ornamented, and as they walked in, they would frequently see the strangely-shaped shadows on the ground created by the sunlight passing through the carved stone ornamentations. As the two of them walked side by side, Shi Yi could not help saying softly, "I like it here."

It was as if this place could stop the passage of time.

He smiled and did not say anything.

They were late after all.

Zhou Wenxing gave her a little grin, as if her evil plan had succeeded. Those two poor people now had sore feet and legs from hiking up.

She once again saw his mother and also met the uncle, whom he had once mentioned was temporarily attending to the Zhousheng family matters for him. There were also many other elders present, but he did not introduce them all one by one to her, which made her feel most unsettled. She also only gave brief greetings to these people, who seemed to simply rotate through in front of her before they all sat down at various tables. It was only the two of them that sat at their own separate table.

Zhousheng Chen seemed to have taken into consideration that there were more than a dozen tables of strangers present, so he deliberately instructed that a screen be set up that completely blocked other people's view of where they were sitting. There was no one else with them besides Uncle Lin and two others who looked to be household managers to wait upon their needs.

He could discern her discomfort.

He casually handed his suit jacket to Uncle Lin, took the warm, damp towel that had been handed to him, and wiped down his hands as he said, "Actually, the main intention of today is to allow you to try the dishes. These elders merely felt that they seldom have the chance to come together, so they took advantage of this opportunity to catch up with one another. Partitioning us away from everyone else like this also allows them to be more at ease when they eat." Shi Yi answered with an "mm" but then glanced over at the three men beside them.

He understood and dismissed the three to have their own meals so that finally, it was just him and her.

The dishes that were being presented one after another were all made of very fresh ingredients.

Peach Blossoms in the Snowy Night, Lotus Pod of Fish Maw, camel soup, and Eight Trigrams Yam[\[2\]](#). When she tasted each of them, she found that they

were all quite good. What was even more enjoyable was, Zhousheng Chen was familiar with each one, and since there was no one else present, he personally introduced each dish to her. “The fish maw needs to be lightly fried and soaked for twelve hours. After it has softened, it will then be brought to a high temperature of 180°C to swell before once again soaking it in room temperature water. A meat broth is added to it and then it is simmered for one minute...”



Clockwise from top left: [Peach Blossoms in the Snowy Night](#), [Lotus Pod of Fish Maw](#), [Eight Triagrams Yam](#), [camel soup](#).

His description was very detailed, and Shi Yi suddenly chuckled, “You know how to make this dish yourself?”

“Not at all. My cooking skills are very poor,” he smiled. “In fact, they cannot even be considered as ‘cooking skills’.”

“Then why are you so clear on how it’s supposed to be made?”

“Previously, when I was selecting the dishes, a chef would explain each one in detail. After I heard the descriptions, I remembered them.”

She replied with an “oh.” Holding onto her chopsticks, she twisted her head away and looked out the window to hide her smile.

If she had not known him well, she would definitely have thought that he was

showing off that his ability of being able to recall anything he had only heard once.

People with high intelligence who did not bother hiding it were really so annoying.

Her eyes drifted back again.

Zhousheng Chen was looking at her.

The other side of the screen partition was so quiet it seemed as if there was no one.

Their eyes locked for some time. He suddenly cleared his throat. "So these dishes, do you think they are okay?"

Shi Yi gave an "mm."

Dishes that could not possibly be any more exquisite. They were flawless. Most importantly, he had said that these dishes were ones he had previously selected. Just this one reason was good enough for her, and she would not have any additional, unnecessary opinions.

They were staying in their own separate courtyard wing, and their rooms were adjacent to one another.

Perhaps at his request, the interior was designed with very comfortable, modern furnishings. Disregarding the simple, old-style setting outside of the room, it was as if she had stepped into a private hotel. She stepped into her room, and shortly after she had taken a shower, the telephone inside the room rang.

He was separated from her by only a wall, but yet he still took the trouble to call her and wish her good night.

Shi Yi held back her laugh and jokingly sighed, "Such timing. If you had called ten minutes earlier, I would still have been in the shower."

Before he had a chance to speak, however, a slight commotion could be heard coming from outside the window.

It came from far away, and she could not hear clearly what it was about.

He seemed to have heard it as well but he still first politely explained, “I need to hang up this phone call first.”

“Alright.”

She did not need to wait long after their call was hung up.

Very quickly, footsteps from downstairs could be heard coming up.

The wooden stairs and floors could not conceal the sound of such hurried strides. Then, the sound of the door of the adjacent room being opened was heard. Shi Yi’s hand was on the doorknob. She hesitated for several seconds but in the end, still opened it. Uncle Lin was walking down the stairs already, and the back profile of Zhousheng Chen could be seen at the top of the stairs. Hearing her step out of her room, he turned around slightly and addressed her. “There are some small matters. You go ahead and rest first.”

The expression on his face seemed slightly different from normal.

Once Shi Yi nodded her head in answer, he hurriedly left.

[1] 字辈 “zi bei.” When members of the same generation within the family are each given a two-character given name but one of the characters is shared between all of them, that character is called a “zi bei” or generation name. The generation name can be either the first or the second character but the position is usually consistent within the lineage. In Zhousheng Chen’s family, all members within his generation belong to the 文 “Wen” generation name and are named 周文XX “Zhou WenXX”, where Zhou is the surname, Wen is the generation name, and XX will be a unique character chosen for that person’s name. His sister is called 周文幸 Zhou Wenxing, brother 周文川 Zhou Wenchuan, and there was also a cousin-sister 周文芳 Zhou Wenfang who had appeared briefly in chapter 4.1.

[2] 雪夜桃花 “Xue Ye Tao Hua” Peach Blossoms in the Snowy Night. This dish is scrambled egg white with shrimp or lobster, but legend has it that this dish was plated for the Tang Emperor Gaozong to look like the scene of peach blossoms in the snow that he saw outside his window.

莲蓬鱼肚 “Lian Peng Yu Du” Lotus Pod of Fish Maw. This dish is said to have been created in the Tang dynasty by an imperial chef when the emperor was admiring lotus flowers with his officials. Fish maw is the main ingredient used to create a lotus pod shape and filled with pearl-sized “lotus seeds” which are formed from a chicken paste.

驼羹 “Tuo Geng.” Camel soup also has roots dating back to the Tang dynasty. Made usually from either the camel’s hooves or hump. 羹 “geng” is actually a thick soup.

八卦山药 “Ba Gua Shan Yao” Eight Trigrams Yam. The main ingredient is Chinese yam. There are several variations of this dish. There is a vegetarian soup version. Another is a sweet version in which the yam is made into a paste and then half of it is mixed with black-sesame to create the dark colour while the other half is left as is. Dates and honey provide sweetness. The photo shows the sweet version, as I’m assuming Zhousheng Chen wouldn’t want two soups.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

20 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 6.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 6.3

[May 27, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [30 Comments](#)



I love a gentleman who asks. <3 Zhousheng Chen and his “great love for research” LOL!

Chapter 6.3 – Beauty is Offered, but Whose Soul is Given? (3)

In this unfamiliar surrounding, it was difficult for her to immediately fall asleep.

This was especially so when coupled with that late night clamor that had suddenly occurred. Fortunately, Zhousheng Chen quickly returned to their courtyard wing. She could hear his voice echoing up from downstairs, so she treaded lightly over to the window and looked down.

In the moonlight, he was facing five or six men dressed in black, one of whom was one of the household managers who been present when they were trying

dishes. His voice was not loud, and she could not hear specifically what he was saying. She only saw, shortly after, him make a waving motion, and then everyone dispersed.

Only he remained, alone in the courtyard.

The two girls who lived on the first floor and were responsible for waiting upon their day-to-day needs asked him the hour of the next day's morning meal. He merely stated that it would be as usual and said something else in a low voice before proceeding upstairs. When Shi Yi stepped away from the window, she could already hear a knocking on her door.

Opening the door, she saw Zhousheng Chen standing there, his left elbow against the doorframe. He smiled, "I am back now and just wanted to let you know."

She also leaned against the door. "Is there something serious?"

He hesitated briefly. "Last time, you saw a pregnant woman, a cousin-sister-in-law. She slipped and fell just now and possibly may be having premature labour."

Her heart gave a leap, not expecting that such a misfortune would suddenly occur, and she asked a few more questions.

But what was strange was, why would he, a man, need to look after this matter? That really did not seem reasonable.

However, since he had not told her the entire story, there was no need for her to ask further. After all, she was not his fiancée right now, and even if she was, there perhaps was still a long way to go for her to truly become a member of this family.

While they were speaking, the girl, Lianhui, came up the stairs carrying a cup of tea. With a slight bow to the two of them, she brought the tea into Shi Yi's room. After Lianhui had departed, Zhousheng Chen explained, "This is water soaked with dried lotus seed sprouts. Consuming some will help you sleep better. Be sure, though, not to drink too much. Should you wake up in the middle of the night, you can also sip small amount to moisten your throat."

No wonder it had the light fragrance of lotus seeds.

Shi Yi's heart seemed to soften a little, and she nodded again. As she lifted her head to say good night to him, he had already suddenly lowered his own. They were such a close distance she could even feel that the tip of his nose was touching hers, gently brushing against her skin, but he did not take things any further.

Her eyes widened with disbelief at this.

"A good night kiss? May I?" He tilted his head slightly to the side.

Shi Yi lightly breathed out a yes.

The two of them were so close they could feel each other's breath on their face.

What if she had not said yes? What would he have done?

Her mind was jumbled from her overwhelming emotions, and she closed her eyes. She could feel something soft against her lips.

At first, she had thought it would be just a brief touch to the lips.

She had not anticipated it would be such a long, deep kiss. Their lips and tongues had the delicate fragrance of lotus seeds, which was also intermixed with the minty taste, although not very strong, of absinthe. There seemed to be something different from that other night, although why it was different or what was different about it, she could not say exactly. She felt the tip of his tongue caress the roof of her mouth, and it was like someone had touched the most fragile part of her. Instinctively, she tried to take a step back, but one of his hands reached down to clasp the back of her waist and she could not retreat.

He detected her reaction was different from normal, and this piqued his interest to investigate it further. Slowly, he started to try to find where that particularly sensitive spot was.

The feeling of even the slightest contact with that spot was unbearable. But when the touch was taken away, she would feel a sense of emptiness. Eventually, she could not figure out whether it felt good or bad. When he finally let go of her, her mind was somewhat in a blank daze, and she looked up at him

with a disoriented expression.

“Are you alright?” He stretched out a finger and lightly brushed her cheek. Very hot.

His finger slid downwards until it reached her lips. A little swollen already.

Shi Yi shifted slightly away from his touch and gave a nearly imperceptible “mm.”

She now finally understood what was different. Zhousheng Chen must have carefully researched how to kiss. Here before this man who had such a great love for research, she truly did not know whether she should laugh or cry.

Perhaps due to the tranquility of the mountains, she woke up more than half an hour later than her usual time.

Zhousheng Chen was not present, so she sat alone in the small dining hall leisurely eating her breakfast. Lianhui and Lianrong treated her with great respect, and it could even be said, rather cautiously. She could not help laughing. “Have you eaten breakfast yet? If you haven’t, you don’t need to stay here with me.”

“We’ve eaten already.” Lianhui was a little younger and she grinned impishly, “Miss Shi Yi must not be aware that, since Eldest Young Master began preparations for his betrothal, the hour of the morning meal became five o’clock. So, besides Miss Shi Yi, you, every single person here had partaken of their morning meal a long time ago.” Shi Yi lowered her head and smiled, continuing to have her porridge of black glutinous rice with lotus seeds.

He had never once mentioned this morning meal rule to her, allowing her to comfortably and naturally wake up and then peacefully have her breakfast. Shi Yi held the spoon in her hand and took a bite. The black glutinous rice suited her palate, and the lotus seeds were fragrant and sweet.

But neither of these was as intoxicating as his thoughtful attentiveness.

Originally, they had arranged that in the morning, he would accompany her to

offer up incense at the temple.

She patiently waited until ten thirty, but Zhousheng Chen still did not turn up. Pulling out the book she had brought with her, she flipped through it to pass the time. Slowly, while she was absorbed in her reading, the hour hand of the clock made its way around. The ringing sound of the gong being struck in sync with the clock pendulum abruptly rang out, a very regular, deep sound that continued for eleven times before quiet was restored.

It was eleven o'clock?

She looked down from the window. Zhousheng Chen still had not come back yet. Inside the courtyard, Lianhui seemed to also be waiting for Eldest Young Master's return as she paced back and forth, looking rather anxious. All of a sudden, a figure suddenly dashed into the courtyard. It was the slightly older girl, Liangrong.

The building she was in was not tall, and the sound of the two girls talking soon drifted up to her.

Lianrong sighed, "It's getting more and more messy. She lost the baby."

An "ah" escaped from Lianhui's lips before she lowered her voice and repeated, "Lost the baby?"

"Yeah. They said she has a bad birth time eight characters^[1] and brought misfortune."

"What do you mean, 'brought misfortune'? Last night, it was obvious that woman surnamed Tang was exploiting her own pregnancy and started to throw insults first. You know, out of all the things to say, that woman just had to bring up in front of everyone how she had called off the engagement. If she had not broken off the engagement, maybe our Little Junior Young Master would have been born by now. Who would dare to speak so scornfully and disrespectfully then—" The voices abruptly disappeared.

Apparently, one of the two remembered that Shi Yi was still upstairs, and very quickly, they ceased their discussion.

Shi Yi briefly savored those few words they had spoken, shocked by the baby's death following its premature birth. She could still recall that time, during the lunch near Jinshan Temple, when the girl, Tang Xiaofu had suddenly barged in.

Shi Yi was unable to guess the identity of the "she" in their discussion who had supposedly brought misfortune upon Tang Xiaofu.

But it was evident that the person who had once been engaged to this "she" was Zhousheng Chen.

Her first thought was the fiancée she had heard about when she was in Xi'an. However, she quickly rejected that possibility because, according to Lianhui's words, if this "she" had not ended her betrothal to Zhousheng Chen, they would have had the opportunity to have children long ago. According to that timeframe, it should have been something that was more in the distant past.

So, that meant there was still someone else?

She did not know what sort of story he had lived out in these past twenty-eight years.

The Zhousheng Chen she now beheld – scholarly and refined, always composed in every situation, seemingly not particularly enticed by romance – what type of past did he hold? He was like a mystery. The more contact she had with him, she realized, the more she did not know about him.

Shi Yi, you need to be patient, to slowly understand and know him.

In the afternoon, Zhousheng Chen finally returned. Today, he wore a deep blue dress shirt and black pants. Besides the silvery-gray sheen given off by his cuff links, his whole body was clothed in dark, somber hues. He quietly took a seat beside her, loosened his cuffs, and gently exhaled a breath.

"Are we going to pick up my dad and mom this afternoon?" Shi Yi poured a glass of water for him.

"There might be some change to the plans." He seemed to be deliberating his choice of words. "Something has happened in the family. To be more exact, there has been a 'white celebratory event' [death] and it would not be

appropriate to hold a ‘red celebratory event’ [marriage or events pertaining to] in these days[2].”

Shi Yi immediately understood.

This reason was certainly correct and proper, so Shi Yi nodded in agreement and did not question further.

Seeing that she was not surprised by the news, Zhousheng Chen was able to make his own deductions. “You heard Lianhui and Lianrong talk about it?”

Shi Yi stuck out her tongue impishly and then explained quietly, “I eavesdropped on them. Please don’t blame them.”

The hint of a smile could be seen in his eyes. “In this manor, there are a total of 68 courtyard wings and 1118 rooms. There are many people, and the types of people are varied as well. Therefore — “

His words broke off. Shi Yi looked over at him puzzledly. “Therefore?”

“Therefore, it is inevitable that there would be idle gossip and irrelevant talk. Truths will be intermixed with falsehoods. After you have heard something, just let it be. Do not dwell too much on it.”

She laughed, “I know. Those big families you see in television dramas are usually portrayed that way.”

With the engagement being so hastily cancelled, even though she could understand the reasoning, she still needed to provide an explanation to her parents.

The two of them discussed the wording they would use.

Zhousheng Chen made a telephone call to her parents. In a very sincere tone, he provided his apologies and then, in just a few brief words, explained the situation. Fortunately, this was only an engagement. Mother also felt that since a funeral situation had occurred in the other side’s family, in any case, it would be inappropriate to hold an engagement and, furthermore, would be inauspicious. As a result, she quickly recovered from this news and cancelled their intended trip to Zhenjiang.

However, her mother still, to some degree, had some murmurs of criticism.

Throughout the whole situation, Zhousheng Chen's mother had not, even out of politeness, provided any explanation whatsoever and did not demonstrate in the slightest the behavior of someone who was about to become a relative by marriage. With a little laugh, Shi Yi vaguely said that his mother was overstricken by grief from this sudden loss, and in her emotional state, the proper etiquettes towards Shi Yi's family slipped.

"Shi Yi," her mother's voice carried a slight sense of heartache, "Mom doesn't need you to marry well. If you find that you cannot adjust to that type of family, it is still not too late. To tell you the truth, for you young people, marriage and divorce are just trivial things, like children's games, much less engagement. You still have plenty of chances to think this over carefully. Even though I quite like that boy, I don't want you to be in a situation where you are treated like you're one class lower than other people."

"I know, I know," she laughed and said jokingly, "I will slowly build up my power and position. Women's rule for the win!"

Mother broke out in laughter from this. She urged her not to forget her proper etiquette and to visit the relative who had had the unfortunate premature labour.

Her mother's words reminded Shi Yi that she should pay a visit to Tang Xiaofu. After all, they had met once before. When she asked Zhousheng Chen, though, he told her that she had already left Zhenjiang, so Shi Yi had no choice but to forget about the idea.

Zhousheng Chen made last minute changes to the plans and prepared to bring her back to Shanghai the following day.

He needed to take care of some remaining matters that afternoon. Shortly after he left, Zhou Wenxing suddenly arrived and said that she was here on Big Brother's insistent request that she take Shi Yi for a walk around. Shi Yi had already been interested in this immense and elaborate piece of old-style architecture, so she naturally was glad to go for a stroll.

The old manor houses of Jiangnan, like this one, all consisted of long corridor, open to the air, after long corridor, and courtyard wing adjoining another

courtyard wing.

They were unlike the large manors in the northwest regions where each courtyard wing had its own distinct entrance and were very structured and rigid.

“My big brother said to make sure to take you to a place.” When Zhou Wenqing smiled, a pointy little canine tooth would show. It was terribly cute.

Shi Yi could not guess where they were going. “What sort of place? The ancestral hall[3]?”

Zhou Wenqing burst into giggles. “That place is not easy to get into during normal times, and anyway, even if you go, there’s nothing fun there. I’m not going to tell you right now. When we’re there, you’ll know.”

They had walked far and the surrounding vegetation had gradually all been replaced by bamboo.

The bamboo stalks were not densely grown and could not be classified as a forest, but together with the sound of flowing water and the gentle breeze, they created a cool and refreshing feeling. They passed through a narrow doorway. The bamboo grove became thicker and lusher, but not far away, an old building, three levels high, could already be seen standing in erect silence.

“Look! It’s that old library tower over there.” Beside her, Zhou Wenxing was telling her, “My big brother said you had once asked him something about ancient-style library towers, so he guessed that you would like this place.”

A breeze blew through the bamboo leaves, creating a rustling sound.

She remembered, at Qinglong Temple, she had asked him whether he had been to one of those ancient-style library towers that had row after row of wooden shelves filled with countless books and scrolls. At the time, he had had an expression that looked as if he did not understand. He had only smiled faintly before giving an answer that seemingly addressed her question but actually did not truly answer it. He had said, the place he frequently spent time in had, on those row after row of wooden shelves, apparatuses used in science experiments..

She had not thought that there would actually be such a building here.

[1] See footnote [3] in chapter 3.3.

[2] 白喜事 “bai xi shi.” A “white celebratory event” or “white happy occasion” is referring to a death by natural causes. In Chinese culture, the color white is often associated with death and funerals. Death that is not due to unnatural causes (accident, execution, homicide, etc.) is considered worthy to be celebrated, hence the idea of “white happy occasion.” In contrast 红喜事 “hong xi shi” or “red celebratory event” is referring to marriage or anything pertaining to marriage, such as engagement. In Chinese culture, the color red is considered good luck, celebratory, and happy.

[3] 祠堂 “ci tang.” The ancestral hall/temple, is a place dedicated to worship of ancestors of a family clan/surname or sometimes, several family clans. Common folk would go to a communal ancestral hall while the wealthy would often have one within their own manor dedicated to their family line.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

21 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 7.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 7.1

[May 30, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [48 Comments](#)



Exactly one year ago, I made my first post on this blog. This update also marks my 99th post here. Thanks to all the readers who have followed along, be it with *Really, Really Miss You*, *My Sunshine* recaps, or here with *Beautiful Bones* and allowing me to share my favourites with you. And of course, my thanks to my favourite Peanuts and our missing landlord, Hui3r for sharing their blog with me.

Speaking of favourites, my *Really, Really Miss You* books (yes, it is “books” plural... I bought 2 because I love it so much!) arrived! WAAAAAAAAAH! Unfortunately, I will have to post the epilogue translation much later (timing is approximately October) because it has a spoiler for *Beautiful Bones*’s ending in there, so for now, all I’ll say is, “OMG OMG OMG, I love the epilogue!! It’s too

cute!!! <3”

And now... if you haven't gotten the hint yet, things are not as they seem when it comes to Zhousheng Chen's family.

Chapter 7.1 – Eighteen Prayer Beads (1)

These ancient library towers inevitably contained many stories.

This one that was before her now, she did not know how many people had come and gone through it or how many love stories it kept hidden inside. But this place was Jiangnan and that ancient library tower of the past that was held in her memory had once stood far away in the northwest regions. It had long ago returned to the dust.



The Xiao Nanchen Prince's manor had been located in Chang'an, which is present day Xi'an (red). The Zhou family manor is in Zhenjiang, relatively close to Shanghai (green) where Shi Yi resides.

[\(Image credit\)](#)

Zhou Wenxing pulled out an old, long copper key and opened the lock.

Perhaps out of worry that Shi Yi was someone who had a need for cleanliness, as she pushed open the door, she explained to her that everyday this place was cleaned by a dedicated person so there would not be any dust. “Oh right, are

you allergic to dust or any flowers or plants?”

Shi Yi shook her head.

“My big brother has allergies to dust as well as flowers and plants.” Zhou Wenxing gave a low chuckle.

Shi Yi nodded. “Noted. Our home in the future will be completely dust free and we will not grow any plants.”

Zhou Wenxing laughed, “His allergies aren’t really that serious.” She suddenly dropped her voice and whispered, as if she was siding with Shi Yi, “If you ever get in a fight with him, just make him smell some flowers and then small red bumps will pop up on his body. Not a lot of them, but it’s especially comical to see.”

Shi Yi seriously had doubts whether this girl in front of her was truly studying medicine. Even she knew that allergies were not something to be ignored, and although most allergic reactions were not severe, when they actually were, they could be very scary.

Inside, there indeed was not a speck of dust to be found.

All along the way, from the first floor to the third, it was as if Shi Yi was admiring ancient artifacts. From the decorative accents in every corner to the engravings in the wood that could be seen when she lifted her head, everything was fascinating to her. Zhou Wenxing did not appear to have much interest in ancient Chinese literature and could not provide any explanations or backgrounds of anything, so she simply let Shi Yi walk to the top level. Because it was an ancient building, the tower soared tall at a height of ten *zhang* [approximately 32 metres][\[1\]](#).

The east and south sides of the tower had top hung windows that opened outward. Books and manuscripts of every description filled the dozen or more rows of shelves. There were scrolls as well as bound books. It was fortunate there were no scrolls of bamboo slips[\[2\]](#), otherwise she truly would have started to suspect which era she was in.

Zhou Wenxing answered a phone call, but because the mobile reception was not very good, she hastily ran downstairs.

Shi Yi was standing by the bookshelves and had randomly picked up a book

when she heard footsteps.

Soon, Zhousheng Chen appeared at the top of the stairs, his hand resting on the end of the carved, wooden handrail. Through the gaps of a three metre high bookshelf, he quickly saw her. “Are there any books that you like?”

“I just arrived not long ago.” She set down her book. “Didn’t you say there were some family matters you needed to take care of?”

“They are finished now.” He smiled faintly, “The remaining issues between the various wives of the cousins and cousin-brothers should not require my involvement.”

His expression was composed, but his voice still carried hints of awkwardness

These issues were, after all, simply conflicts in the family and indeed did not require him to provide the resolution.

As a result, he had quickly departed, and even his pace had been somewhat brisk. He wanted only to find Shi Yi and see, when she saw this gift, what sort of reaction she would have. But now that he was looking at her, he realized her response was not important.

With her back facing the window, the tranquil, content, and traditional aura she carried seemed very much like those women of legends, the ones where a single glance at their beauty would bring about the ruin of a city.

“Why don’t you go over to the window and see?” He strolled over toward her.

Shi Yi stared blankly at him for a brief moment. Her eyes flickered over to glance at the half-open window, but her feet would not move. A deep-seated terror struck her, and even her fingers started to tremble and her breathing grew ragged. She did not have a fear of heights, and ten *zhang* was merely a height of ten storeys anyway. Why, then, was she so afraid? She gently inhaled a deep breath, worried that he might notice her abnormal behavior.

He, however, had already stepped over toward the window, opened it up fully, and engaged the hook that would keep it propped open.

In this way, her view opened up even wider.

A breeze blew in, and on the shelves nearest the window, some books rustled as their pages were turned.

Leaning against the window, he turned back toward her and invited, “Come. Look over here.”

Shi Yi did not dare move. Her entire body was aching, the sort of pain that seeped out from the cracks of one’s bones, and she clenched her fists tightly.

He was looking out the window and had not noticed her unusualness. “Standing here, you have a complete view of this entire old manor as well as the sunset.”

His voice was light, and in the refreshingly cool evening breeze, it seemed so familiar.

Shi Yi suppressed the fear she was feeling in the depths of her heart. Slowly, step by step, she walked over and offered her hand out to him. He gently took it in his own and led her over to the window. In that instant her hand touched the window frame, she saw nothing before her eyes except the red of blood. His voice should have been so close, yet it sounded indistinct, as if she was hearing it through a curtain of mist.

“Are you unwell?” Zhousheng Chen’s one arm was beside Shi Yi, its hand against the window sill supporting himself. Lowering his head, he saw her complexion had grown a little pale. “Shi Yi?”

He called her name. His breath was beside her ear, and there was the warmth of his body.

All the things of reality that stimulated her sense of touch gradually pulled her back from her nightmare until the sights before her became clear again.

The sheen of blood dissolved away.

Only the afterglow of the setting sun remained.

The unbroken stretch of white walls and black tile rooftops as well as dense layers of vibrant green seemed to be stretched out by the sunset’s remaining glow. It was indeed an ancient manor where the eyes were unable to see its bounds. Those walls that seemed to be fire separation walls[3] at the edge of the

manor's boundaries were hidden in the twilight.

Extremely beautiful.

She thought to herself, he wanted her to see the beautiful scenery.

There was a slight layer of perspiration on her forehead, and here, in the remnants of the sunlight that was about to disappear, he finally could clearly see it. "You have suddenly perspired so much. You really are not feeling well?" She shook her head, but before she had a chance to speak, Zhou Wenxing had already come back up the stairs.

Zhousheng Chen had originally wanted to help her wipe away the sweat on her forehead, but because of this, he retracted his hand that had already reached forward halfway and slipped it into his pant pocket. It seemed, in the presence of a third person, he was always very reserved, so reserved that he seemed like a monk who did not allow himself to be near a woman's charms.

This action of his caused Shi Yi to break out in laughter.

As a result, when Zhou Wenxing walked up, the scene before her was Shi Yi laughing amusedly while Big Brother was looking at Shi Yi with a prim and proper expression and not a trace of a smile on his face, yet his eyes contained a subtle hint of joy in them.

Zhou Wenxing found that she was starting to like this future sister-in-law more and more.

One must know, this scientist big brother of hers had never shown any interest in women before.

That evening, Zhousheng Chen brought her to see his maternal grandmother.

To her great puzzlement, his maternal grandmother was very elderly in age but she still did not live in the manor.

Their vehicle drove out of the mountain areas and turned into a nearby little town that could not be considered prosperous. There, they saw the elderly lady who lived alone in a small, two-level home. Her age was approaching one century

and her vision was blurry from age, but her mind was clear.

While Shi Yi sat beside the rocking chair, talking with and keeping Grandmother company, Zhousheng Chen spent the entire time patiently inspecting all the appliances and various installations. He even needed to personally check the shower head to determine if any of the spray holes had become clogged.

“Even the most patient person, when attending to an elderly person of no blood relation, will lose their patience. No matter how many people are assigned to this place, it is unavoidable that there will be times of inattentiveness, so it is best to personally inspect everything,” he explained lightly to Shi Yi, who had come over to observe him performing manual labour.

Shi Yi nodded in agreement. “There will always be lax moments by the caregivers if they are not that person’s own children.”

He smiled, “Are you empathizing?”

She told him, “There was a time when my mom and my [maternal] uncles all took turns caring for my [maternal] grandmother because they found out that the caregiver would never chat with Grandma and did not give her adequate time out in the sunshine. Those are all little things, but as a son or a daughter, they’re things you would consider.”

As she watched him, she could not help wondering, was he also this patient when he was in the laboratory?

When Zhousheng Chen had finished his inspection of the bathroom, he turned on the faucet and washed his hands.

Her eyes were fixed keenly upon him, and she discovered that his palm seemed to have a scar on it. “Your hand, was it injured before?”

With an “mm”, he answered, “It’s very normal.”

By “normal,” he, of course, was referring to the small risks that were always present when one was working in a laboratory. Shi Yi pressed her lips together. Her heart twinged slightly, but at the same time, she felt that that was his occupation and there really was not much she should say.

Seeing that his inspection work was nearly complete, she left the bathroom and went back to continue chatting with Grandmother.

Zhousheng Chen's head was lowered as he carried on meticulously washing his hands, but he could not hold back a smile as he shook his head slightly.

When Shi Yi had returned to Grandmother's side, the elderly lady fumbled and felt for her hand and slipped a strand of jadeite beads onto it.

Grandmother clasped her hand and gently patted it with her own. Before she could take a closer look, she heard Grandmother start to speak.

"I bore a daughter who forever shall carry the fault of having done an injustice to the Zhousheng family." Grandmother's enunciation was somewhat unclear, so Shi Yi bent over at the waist to be closer and listened with some difficulty. "Eldest Young Master, ah, he should not have taken her as his wife. If he had known about her and Second Young Master, then he should not have taken her as his wife."

Shi Yi listened in bewilderment and surmised that the "Eldest Young Master" Grandmother was referring to was not Zhousheng Chen but rather, his father.

Grandmother heaved a heavy sigh.

Then, with her hand holding a circle of 108 jadeite prayer beads, she quietly began reciting Buddhist sutras.

Zhousheng Chen happened to step out at that moment, and when he saw the circle of eighteen jadeite prayer beads on her wrist, surprise flashed briefly in his eyes before quickly disappearing. During the return journey, he told her the origin of those eighteen prayer beads. "It has a circumference of twenty-eight centimetres. There are eighteen jadeite beads in total." His hand slid down the length of the string beneath the coral guru bead. "Rose-colored tourmaline was used for the carving, and there are also beads of coral and pearl.[\[4\]](#)"



18 jadeite beads in total.

Spacer and guru beads (the one from which the string is hanging) are made of coral. Decoration on bottom of the string is rose-colored tourmaline. Tiny pearls are on the string. [Image credit](#)

She lifted up her wrist. “It’s very exquisite.”

“This is an item from the late Ming, early Qing dynasties.”

Suddenly realizing its significance, Shi Yi could not restrain a laugh.

“Zhousheng Chen, can you give me a safe as a gift? I’m going to lock these up.”

“These are prayer beads. There have been many generations of people who have used them when reciting sutras and chanting mantras. Wear it,” he smiled. “Buddha will bless you.”

“That I do know.” Using her index finger, she fiddled with the individual beads. “This is the smallest type. There are also ones that have 27, 54, and 108 beads – all prayer beads used when reciting sutras.”

The car drove through the forested mountain area. This road that wound around the mountain was very serene so that even the air seemed fresher.

A light breeze blew in through the half-lowered window, tousling the stray hairs beside her cheek. Her smiling expression as well as that bit of pride that could be seen in this very small but obvious moment of showing off her learnedness caused Shi Yi to appear... rather cute.

He looked at her for a while, not speaking.

She, on the other hand, was slightly embarrassed by his gaze, so she smiled and did not say more.

A fixed distance was maintained between his sedan and the four vehicles that were following behind as they drove in a line toward the old manor.

However, when they were nearly there, several police vehicles could be seen off in the distance stopped outside of the manor gates.

Those police vehicles were quiet, but the headlights were all on. The stark, white light of those four or five vehicles crossed and interwove, clearly illuminating the roadway and stone carvings in front of the manor house. Uncle Lin quickly put on his headset and in a low voice, instructed the trailing vehicles to not follow them and leave, instead, by a side road.

Shi Yi did not understand what this was about and quickly turned to glance at Zhousheng Chen.

He did not show any surprise.

He merely pulled down his sleeves that had previously been rolled up and fastened the cuff links. "Uncle Lin, pass Shi Yi's passports over to me."

Uncle Lin left hand grasped the steering and he continued to drive the sedan steadily toward the old manor while his right hand reached into the glove compartment, pulled out four passports, and handed them back to Zhousheng Chen.

"Shi Yi, remember what I tell you now." Zhousheng Chen took her handbag and placed the four passports into it. "You now hold the citizenship of four countries. I possess diplomatic immunity. On paper, you are technically my wife and therefore, you also have that same immunity."

His voice when he spoke was level and cool. Shi Yi was having some difficulties comprehending.

"Simply put," he told her calmly, "regardless of what may happen, you do not need to pay heed to any of it."

Their vehicle slowly came to a halt.

Uncle Lin pulled off his gloves, carefully folded them and placed them on the

driver's seat, straightened his suit, and then got out of the car first. In a state of astonishment, Shi Yi watched everything that was happening right there before her. Two policemen approached, very politely shook Uncle Lin's hand, and spoke in low tones with him.

Uncle Lin very quickly shook his head. He leaned over to glance inside the car and explained something to them.

A silent picture was playing before her eyes. She could not hear any of the conversation, but she could still sense the graveness of the situation.

[1] As opposed to modern times where a typical storey is approximately 3.3 metres, so a 3 storey/level building would be around 10 metres tall. This ancient, three level library tower is about three times taller than that.

[2] In ancient China, prior to the widespread use of paper, the material used for writing was strips of bamboo, called slips. Scrolls were formed by binding the slips together using thread.



[Image credit](#)

[3] 防火墙 “feng huo qiang.” Literally “wind-fire wall.” In traditional Chinese architecture, a gabled end wall that rises above the pitch of the roofline to prevent fire from spreading between buildings.



[Image credit](#)

[4] Buddhist prayer beads, or mala, are used in Buddhism to count mantras, prayers, chants, *etc.* Shi Yi's was gifted one with 18 prayer beads, all in jadeite. The picture I included, above, seems to fit Zhousheng Chen's description very closely. In addition to those 18 jadeite beads, there is a guru bead (seen in the picture with a string hanging directly below it) and additional spacer beads of coral. This is a particularly fancy string of prayer beads, obviously. The carved decoration on the bottom of the string is carved from rose-colored tourmaline and if you look closely, on the string, there are many tiny pearls. This particular set of prayer beads also dates from the late Ming to Qing dynasty and is found in the Palace Museum (Forbidden City) in Beijing. It would have been considered a treasure even in the imperial palace of the Qing dynasty.

Additional Comments:

Tehe, a little bit of a cliffhanger. What's going on? We'll save that for my 100th post on this blog. :p Haha!

Questions for you all: Did you understand what was happening to Shi Yi inside the library tower when she broke out in cold sweat? What are your thoughts on Zhousheng Chen's grandmother's cryptic talk with Shi Yi? (I'm trying to gauge how well I translated those passages.)

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

22 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 7.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 7.2

[June 3, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [58 Comments](#)



100th post!

The cycles of reincarnation may change the “skin” but Shi Yi’s faith is placed in the belief that his “beautiful bones” would never change, no matter how many times the wheel of time may turn.

Chapter 7.2 – Eighteen Prayer Beads (2)

The discussion was still carrying on.

From outside the window, she could still only hear silence, but her mind had already whirled through a countless number of jumbled thoughts.

She had never even seen before the passports that were in the handbag beside her, let alone have any sort of understanding of the whole situation. She had thought that Zhousheng Chen was simply his family’s “firstborn son of the firstborn son” and had never guessed that he would have such power to be able

to completely change her citizenship without even her knowledge of it.

The four or five police vehicles in front of them as well as Uncle Lin's composed manner as he took care of the situation showed that he had already been aware of all of this and had anticipated that it would happen. Hence, he had first made the arrangements such that their identities would ensure their security.

He had "diplomatic immunity"? Which diplomatic envoy was he?

Uncle Lin had already turned around, walked up to Zhousheng Chen's side of the vehicle, and opened the door for him. Very soon, he had stridden briskly over to Shi Yi's side, and in the same slightly bowed posture, had opened her door as well.

After getting out of the vehicle, Shi Yi quickly took Zhousheng Chen's arm.

With so many police vehicles parked in front of the gate, it was impossible to not feel anxious, and as a result, her hold on his arm was rather tight.

"Mr. Zhousheng, hello."

The middle-aged police officer in charge as well as a prosecutor who had personally come to the scene to investigate approached him. After shaking his hand, in an official and professional tone, they stated their purpose for the visit.

The whole time, Zhousheng Chen smiled and remained quiet while Shi Yi kept her eyes lowered and fixed upon the ground. When she heard them mention the murder case of Tang Xiaofu, however, she could not restrain her fingers from tightening their grip slightly.

The middle-aged police officer stated that he knew he had diplomatic immunity.

However, this case was not just a simple criminal case. The series of criminal allegations — illegal detention, involuntary disappearance, murder, and torture — all, to some degree, could be connected to him, and some of these were even transnational crimes. Shi Yi was overcome with fear as she listened to this, but the whole time, she clutched tightly to his arm, not allowing herself to show any abnormal expression on her face.

He remained as before, not saying anything until at the end, he very politely

shook their hands and bid them farewell.

The power of silence was very daunting.

Yet, at the same time, was it not also a black hole in which one's imagination could be unleashed?

This uninteresting-looking ethnic Chinese man was an associate professor at the UC Berkeley College of Chemistry but ten days ago had made public his identity as a Russian diplomat. Such a mysterious and bizarre change in identity. Even this woman beside him, prior to the case, had changed citizenships and became his lawfully married wife in Russia. All of these things were clearly a maneuver to deal with these allegations.

“Mr. Zhousheng, we would wish for you to stop all your activities in Xi'an's knowledge exchange project.”

Zhousheng Chen pondered briefly. “I am most regretful about it, but I will certainly respect your request.”

Out of good manners, he observed the proper etiquette as host and master of the property and watched until all the uninvited guests had departed.

Shi Yi wanted to move, but as her nerves had been on the edge and she had been tensed up for such a long period of time, her legs were already numb. Zhousheng Chen did not notice and had taken two steps forward before he realized anything was wrong. But it was too late. He had moved but she could not keep up. Her legs gave out beneath her and her knee hit the ground.

Very painful. Her brows furrowed together.

Her stockings slid against the rough surface of the ground and pulled against the scrape wound on her knee.

“My apologies, Shi Yi.” He lowered one knee down and crouched before her, carefully inspecting her injury.

Because it was so painful, she was about to sit down onto the ground but he stopped her action. “Do not sit on the ground. The light here is too dim, and it would not be convenient to have people come out here to check your wound. I

will carry you inside.”

Without waiting for her response, he had already stretched out his arms and lifted her up into his embrace.

Very quickly, he strode up the more than one dozen bluestone steps. Uncle Lin swiftly pushed open the main doors. The whole way, he did not dare delay and it could almost be said that he strode so quickly it was as if he had wings. All along the way, people would bow and greet him with “Eldest Young Master” and some of the more familiar faces would stare in slight surprise at them.

Shi Yi leaned her head against his shoulder and listened to his heart that was beating very fast. Her breathing also started to grow quicker.

It was because of the pain and also because she was being carried in his arms like this.

She stared at her silvery-gray stockings that were now bloodstained at the knee as well as covered in snagged threads and runs. It looked so wretched and ugly. She was concealing a very secret thought, one that was actually able to overshadow the fear she had felt earlier and the pain from her fall: she needed to cover up her knee because she very much did not want him to see any part of her that was in a sorry state.

Zhousheng Chen, of course, did not know what she was thinking.

The tension in his heart finally loosened only after they were inside their own manor wing and he saw the Chinese and western doctors Uncle Lin had sent for.

More than just the family physicians were waiting in the sitting hall.

Truly, it was filled with sitting people.

The ones Shi Yi knew included his mother, his uncle, as well as his younger brother Zhou Wenchuan and his wife, Tong Jiaren. The ones she did not know were, of course, the distant or closely related elders of the family. It seemed those of the same generation as him were not eligible to participate in this matter. When those people saw this scene of the two of them, they each had different expression. The look on his mother’s and Tong Jiaren’s faces shifted, whereas Zhou Wenchuan seemed to find the situation very amusing and even sighed that Eldest Brother was becoming more and more romantic.

"I shall return very shortly," he stated briefly and then carried her upstairs.

All four family physicians followed up the stairs behind him.

After he had set her down on the wooden chair in her room, Zhousheng Chen finally noticed that his hand was actually resting against her chest.

In the same instant he saw this, Shi Yi noticed it as well.

He very swiftly pulled his hand back, and then after instructing the doctors to quickly tend to the wound, he went back downstairs without a backwards glance.

Before long, from downstairs, the sound of voices quarreling could be heard, some louder, some not as loud. The wordings used were vehement, but the tone and demeanor were still restrained.

The soundproofing of this old-style house was not very good, and she could hear generally that his mother was reproaching him and that his uncle's tone was very severe. Soon, she heard a woman sobbing. She pondered briefly. The only woman who was relatively younger was Tong Jiaren, but why would she be crying?

Lianhui handed her a warm, damp towel.

She took it from her and saw that Lianhui's attention was also distracted by the voices downstairs. She suddenly remembered what had been said the other day. Could it be, Tang Xiaofu's premature labour had been caused by Tong Jiaren? That prosecutor had said this was a murder case, so if that was the case, she could not escape suspicion either.

She carried out numerous, complicated conjectures like this.

The four household physicians' countenances, in contrast, were all flat and composed, as if they knew nothing about anything that was going on.

One of the doctors who practiced western medicine had treated her wound, but the remaining three still did not dare neglect their duties and each re-examined her injury. This minor little scrape on the knee was being viewed as something more serious than a murder case.

All of a sudden, the crash of shattering porcelain was heard.

Downstairs, there was momentary silence. Gradually, the quarreling changed to become only his uncle speaking. His actual words were somewhat indistinct, and she listened hard for a little while. The general idea was along the lines that the period for such a large-scale injection of funds against the market trend would be twenty to thirty years, and that would violate family rules. Furthermore, Tang Xiaofu's unexpected death had already brought about the Tang family's fury, and hence, they had exposed everything out into the open and were refusing to settle the matter privately.

"The Zhousheng family's several hundred years of seclusion from the outside world must not be destroyed by your hands."

She very clearly heard this last sentence.

Her heart was beating too rapidly and even felt slightly painful.

In regards to his family's rules, she was not very clear on them.

From his words, she could vaguely deduce that this was a family in which the rules were more important than the people. Otherwise, he would not have chosen to immediately become engaged to her so he could do something he desired to do. However, the "white occasion" that had caused the postponement of their wedding had now evolved into a murder case. Although she knew that diplomatic immunity would allow him to avoid criminal charges being brought against him, he would not be able to evade the consequence of deportation.

Zhousheng Chen.

What is it you want to do?

"Miss Shi Yi, you look as if you are rather tired. Do you need to rest for a while?" Lianhui softly asked.

She nodded. She felt she needed some time of quiet.

Eventually, quiet was restored downstairs. Noiselessly, a wind blew in through the window, carrying with it a humid, stuffy feeling. It appeared that it was going

to rain soon. She thought of Tang Xiaofu's face and could even remember how she had, in a light voice, talked about how she had given in and the bad feelings she had with living in an eerie old manor.

Shortly after, someone walked into the room and closed the window.

She lay on her side, curled up on the chaise longue, and opened her eyes.

In order to talk face to face with her, Zhousheng Chen sat against the edge of the low, glass tea table. It was fortunate it had an old, solid mahogany base and was able to support the weight of such a tall man.

"I have never asked you, is voice acting interesting?" His first words when he opened his mouth turned out to be on such a subject.

She smiled, "It's very fun, but you need to have a very good imagination. For instance, the recording engineer would often request, 'Teacher Shi Yi, you need to imagine yourself walking in the pouring rain and you've just broken up with the one you love. You need that feeling of grief so deep it's beyond tears.'" She remembered softly, "At the time, I almost felt helpless. You watch the people when they're acting and they can at least work with and play off one another's acting, but I can only look at my script and microphone and rely purely on my imagination for how to feel 'grief so deep it's beyond tears.'"

Shi Yi described several different examples.

Zhousheng Chen listened attentively.

The sound of rain gradually could be heard. She could picture that the scene outside should be one of lightning streaking across the night sky, but unfortunately she could not see it. When he had shut the window earlier on, he had also closed the curtains.

She picked up her cup of tea, took a drink to moisten her throat, and then she heard him ask, "With me, do you ever feel like you are uncomfortable or unaccustomed to some things?"

"Sometimes." She poured him a cup of tea as well and handed it to him. "I'll feel like there are a lot of things I can't see through or understand, and I'll be worried that if something suddenly happens, I won't know what to do."

Zhousheng Chen took a sip and thought for a moment. "Are you ever scared?"

She gave a little smile and did not answer this question.

Life, death, reincarnation. She did not even find death mysterious. What would she be afraid of?

If she really was to count something, then the only thing she was afraid of was never seeing him again.

"You said," she turned the question to him instead, "you changed my citizenship."

Zhousheng Chen nodded. "My sincere apologies that I did not consult you prior to doing so."

"It's alright." She thought to herself, there must have been a necessary reason.

"In regards to your parents and family, I would also hope to do the same for them, but they are, after all, elders." He paused briefly. "What is your opinion?"

She looked at him. "Is it absolutely necessary?"

"A precautionary measure."

She contemplated for a moment. "Let's talk about it again when we can think of a good reason. If you are trying to..... um, circumvent the law, and that is why you are doing it, they might....." She hesitated, not knowing what wording to use.

He could not help bursting out in chuckles. "I am indeed trying to avoid something, but," he cast a quick glance at her and said, "Shi Yi, I would never do anything bad."

"I know."

"You know?"

"What I mean is, I trust you."

"Even in the face of all those allegations tonight, you still trust me?"

Tonight, with all those allegations against him, she could not imagine what it would have been like if it had been any other ordinary person in her place.

In silence, she observed his hands. They had just the right amount of flesh compared to bone, and his palms were quite a bit larger than hers. A man's bone structure was always thicker and longer than a woman's. Originally, she had thought that these hands were different from hers. A scientist's hands must be like his brain and be built differently from an ordinary person. However, tonight, she discovered that it was not just this one aspect in which they were different. This pair of hands held power and authority, and they were very difficult to understand.

He could switch identities at will, and he was unpredictable to people. When confronted with so many horrible allegations, he could still face them with calm and composure.

She was extremely scared that one day when she awoke, this man, Zhousheng Chen would have vanished and there would be no trace of him ever to be found again.

He watched as her slender hand came to rest on top of his own and gently clasp it.

A strange, unfamiliar atmosphere seemed to quietly flow between them.

He lifted his eyes to look at her.

Shi Yi gazed back at him, and in a soft voice, she gave her answer. "So long as you allow me to always be with you, I will trust you unconditionally."

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

23 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 7.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 7.3

[June 6, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [38 Comments](#)



[Image Credit](#)

I've been hit by a flu, so my brain feels like cotton candy right now. Please forgive any weird grammar, sentence structure, *etc.* I've tried to read through and make edits, but I'll come back to double check when my head is clear.

Sometimes the small gestures are what touch the heart...

Chapter 7.3 – Eighteen Prayer Beads (3)

She had been struck with fear that he would suddenly leave her.

So, this was the first time she had spoken honestly about her true feelings.

With slight apprehension, she let him know how important he actually was to her.

The less she understood about this family's true background, the more fearful she was, as if she had already been pushed to the edge of a vortex.

No one understood more clearly than her how easy it would be if one wanted to end the connection – the fate – in this life that one person had with another. Perhaps, a simple turn at the corner of a crosswalk would result in two people separated by the distance between heaven and earth [separated by death][\[1\]](#). She would sometimes even wonder, if she chose to let go, would she become the next Tang Xiaofu of this old manor? After all, to this family, she was also a newly arrived guest and was very much a misfit.

It was evident that even his mother was hostile toward her.

Shi Yi clutched his hand, refusing to loosen her hold.

“Shi Yi.” He was visibly moved by her words. With his right hand, he gently patted her hand that was holding tightly onto his. “To me, you have always been unforeseen. I seem to have never gotten a good grasp on how to approach you in our relationship, and I do not know how to answer your questions.” He hesitated briefly, and then, lowering his voice slightly, he said, “Thank you for trusting me.”

A very formal and proper answer. It could be written down and made into a standard thank you email template.

She pulled her hand back and laid back down on the chaise lounge with a slight feeling of frustration due to his indifference. She gave a quiet laugh and, taking a saying that had been overused to death in movies and television dramas, complained, “Sheesh... ‘I had given my heart to the moon, but yet the moon shone only on the gutter.’ [You have chosen to ignore my sincere heart.][\[2\]](#)”

Her voice really was nice.

He let out a chuckle. “Wrong word choice. There is no ‘gutter.’ You are now my legally recognized wife.”

If he had not mentioned it again, she would have overlooked this point.

With an “oh,” she curled up her legs and rested her face against the wicker chair. Her heart, that just a moment ago had sunk dejectedly, now seemed to float up again. The wicker lounge chair was cushioned with a soft, white fox pelt and was very similar to the chair that he of the past had once liked. She

remembered, she would always like to quietly climb onto it, and while he was reading or writing or even when he was on the other side of the beaded curtain angrily rebuking his subordinates, she would lie on it and listen quietly.

His voice had once been extremely pleasing to the ears.

She had rehearsed it in her mind tens of thousands of times, how to imitate the tones of his voice, from the tonal quality when he first started speaking to how he would end his words. She of that time period had once thought, if she ever was able to produce speech from her mouth, the first words she said would be “Zhousheng Chen.”

“Zhousheng Chen,” she addressed him.

“Mm?”

“Zhousheng Chen.” She changed to a different voice and called him again.

“Mm.” He undertood her intent.

“Zhousheng Chen.” She persisted and spoke his name yet again.

“Mm.” He played along with her little game.

She felt tremendously happy, so happy she was going to go crazy. Rubbing her face against the fox fur, she squinted her eyes to gaze at him, this man who was now legally her husband. Tonight, he was wearing a solid, light-blue dress shirt with dark blue cuffs and a pair of silver-gray pants — colors that gave off such a comfortable feeling. These colors complemented the color of the stockings she had been wearing, but unfortunately, now, she could only keep her legs bare with her knee wrapped in white gauze.

“It is May 11,” he told her.

“What is May 11?” she asked, puzzled.

“Our anniversary. I have chosen one that is homophonic with your name. Very easy to remember, then.”

She felt somewhat in a daze, that this could not be real. “Easy to remember? Will you forget it easily?”

“No. I am very mindful of numbers. And plus,” he paused briefly and gave a

little smile, “there are some important dates that must be remembered.”

That night, all she could recall was that she was extremely happy.

Afterward, when she recalled that night, she still could only remember that feeling of happiness. There had not even been any superfluous and flowery words. In her two lifetimes worth of memories combined, the number of happy moments was not many. The ones that were particularly deeply engrained in her memory were riding freely with him through Chang'an city on a horse and this night, when he had said she was his legally recognized wife.

Shi Yi remembered, afterwards, her conversations with him were really not very logical, and she could not seem at all to hold back her happy laughter. Outside the windows, there was flashing lightning, rolling thunder, and pouring rain, but inside the room, it was warm and peaceful. When he finally bid her good night and left the room, she noticed that underneath the chair's fox pelt, there was an old, red sandalwood box with a coiled dragon carved into it.

Carefully, she opened the box and found two rings lying side by side.

An emerald ring and a very simple, yellow gold diamond ring. She surmised that he must have had these already prepared earlier.

On top of the lid, there was a piece of paper pinned to it.

Written in his handwriting was a simple message: *The emerald ring is the engagement ring, to respect family tradition. The yellow gold diamond ring is the wedding ring and should be suitable for wearing day to day. Hope you like it.*

At the end, he had even scrawled, *Happy marriage day*[\[3\]](#).

Well, perhaps he was the only man in the world who would use such a method to give the rings to his lawful wife and to also wish her a happy marriage day. She held the box in her hands, contemplated for quite some time, and then placed the yellow gold diamond ring onto her own finger.

She thought to herself, from a man who could calmly relocate his materials after seeing his laboratory explode right in front of him and then walk over to another laboratory to continue his experiments, she really should not have too

high of expectations.

His choice of date, May 11 alone, was already sufficient to her.

Fifth month, eleventh day. 511 [pinyin: wu shi yi]. My Shi Yi.[\[4\]](#)

At five o'clock in the morning, she could hear the sounds of him leaving to head out. She dashed over to open the door and asked him whether he would like her to have the morning meal with him. He stood at the top of the stairs and hesitated for a moment before telling her that today was not a good time. Shi Yi understood what he meant by this and was only upset at herself for allowing her happy mood to muddle her brain so that she forgot that right now was still a chaotic period.

Sensing her disappointment, Zhousheng Chen walked back from the stairs toward her again. "Do not overthink it. I simply am afraid that you would be put in too much of an uncomfortable state," he explained in a low voice, "because this morning, I will be encountering some difficult situations."

"I understand, I understand," she reiterated to him. "I'll wait here for you to come back. If you don't have any appetite when you are there, come back and I will have breakfast with you."

He nodded. "Alright."

After he had left, Shi Yi reflected on her behaviour just now – completely like a little wife..... She was a little embarrassed and also somewhat worried. She had not seen in person the heated conflict of the previous night, but she had managed to hear most of it through bits and pieces. Even simply from what she heard last night, she could already deduce what sort of scenes he meant when he described them as "difficult situations."

She stayed in her room, sometimes sitting and other times standing in waiting.

From the hazy darkness of the sky at five o'clock in the morning to the glorious brightness from the newly risen sun, only one hour had elapsed. Lianhui had asked her three times whether she would like breakfast to be prepared, but she still instructed her to wait some more. The result of her waiting, however, was a message from his mother instructing her that she was to accompany her to the

temple to offer up incense.

When Lianhui told her this, she was somewhat incredulous.

Very quickly, though, she recovered as she realized her status had now changed.

She had wanted to ask Lianhui what preferences Madam had in terms of clothing, but as the words were about to leave her lips, she stopped them. Zhousheng Chen had once warned her, and she still clearly remembered his words: "In this manor, there are a total of 68 courtyard wings and 1118 rooms. There are many people and the types of people are varied as well."

She could identify with this, not because of any television dramas, but because she had personally experienced this in real life.

Yesterday's situation was not hard to understand. He, too, was trapped in this chaotic swirl of matters, and each step he took was tread with difficulty. Therefore, in this place, Shi Yi told herself that, besides him, she needed to be very careful around each person.

Since her leg had a wound on it and was wrapped in gauze, she could not wear skirts or tight-fitting pants.

She did have a tracksuit amongst the clothes she had brought.

When she thought of his family rules, though, she grit her teeth and put on a cheongsam instead. She removed several layers of the gauze until, with difficulty, she was able to slip on a pair of opaque black tights. Her appearance could still be considered appropriate except she could not wear high-heeled shoes, so the overall effect was rather strange.

Because she had needed to very slowly and carefully remove some gauze, she took longer than she normally would have.

By the time she arrived at the front gate of the manor, there were already the sounds of car doors closing one after another. Zhousheng Chen stood far away beside the second car, waiting for her. Upon seeing her attire, a fleeting expression of surprise flashed across his face.

“Big Sister[5].” The front passenger door of the first sedan in the line-up was pushed open. Dressed in black suspenders with his dress pants, Zhousheng Ren poked his head out. “My mother has said for you to come sit in our car.” Shi Yi had just taken two steps when she stopped again and looked over at Zhousheng Chen.

Zhousheng Chen did not speak or show any outward expression as he gave a slight nod.

Anxiously, she walked as fast as possible to the vehicle. Zhousheng Ren hopped out of the car and opened the door for her. In the instant the door was opened, she saw his mother sitting alone in the rear seat, wearing a cheongsam with a dark-colored design and a purple shawl to complement. Her make-up was meticulously applied, and her smile demonstrated her fine upbringing. “Miss Shi Yi, please come in the car.”

Such a distant form of address.

Was his mother not aware that she and Zhousheng Chen were legally married as husband and wife now? Or... was she truly unwilling to acknowledge this? She became increasingly nervous. Out of the corner of her eye, she glanced over at Zhousheng Chen, who had been standing next to his vehicle the whole time, and watched as he sat into his car.

The procession of vehicles quickly left. As Shi Yi sat shoulder to shoulder with his mother, it, surprisingly, was particularly quiet. After they had driven for quite some time, it was finally his teenage younger brother who turned his head and looked back at her from the front row of seats. “Big Sister Shi Yi, I’ve never had the chance to tell you, you are very pretty.”

She smiled, “Thank you.”

Zhousheng Ren also grinned.

She could sense that this boy, who at first glance seemed taciturn, was attempting to ease the atmosphere in the car, which was so cold it seemed as if it could freeze over. Perhaps their very brief exchange worked, for his mother at last shook her head gently and said with a smile, “Xiao Ren, when you look at a person, you cannot just look at their face. I’ve told you before, ‘The charms of beauty; gleaming teeth; the music of Zheng and Wei — these are pursued for the

pleasure they bring. But they are the axe which severs one's nature[6].’ Do you remember?”

She was taken aback.

Zhousheng Ren secretly threw a comforting gaze at Shi Yi but then answered his mother in a solemn voice, “Yes. Mother once said, this line is meant to say, a beautiful woman’s charms and uncultured popular music will beguile one’s mind and nature, and one must by all means avoid indulging in them.”

The angle from where the boy was sitting was just enough that he could still make eye contact with her.

Grateful to Zhousheng Ren for his kindness, the corner of Shi Yi’s lips also secretly turned up in a smile.

After this, the remainder of the drive was in silence.

She sat up straight and properly, thinking, perhaps his mother was truly angry. After all, in regards to his marriage Zhousheng Chen had not acted in accordance with his family’s arrangements. Perhaps she was like the mother-in-law of those wealthy, influential families, who would always exercise her authority and put the new daughter-in-law in her place first. She silently comforted herself, it was actually fortunate that the family was like this because, no matter how difficult his mother’s personality might be, she would not neglect any of the expected etiquette and would, therefore, never blatantly do anything to shame her.

Her knee started to ache from maintaining the same sitting position for such a long period.

She thought to herself, just hang in there for a little longer, just hang in there for a little longer. So in this way, she preserved that position for another twenty minutes. She finally could not bear it anymore and discreetly shifted her legs a little. On the other side of the window, the scenery was starting to show indications there was an ancient temple nestled in the mountains, and she gave an inward sigh of relief. The vehicle came to a stop. Zhousheng Ren jumped out of the car first and opened the door for his mother.

“Miss Shi Yi.” Before the car door had opened, his mother made a statement.

“In regards to your legal relationship as husband and wife, the Zhousheng family will not recognize it. I hope that you will seriously consider whether you will still persist in being with my son.”

While she was still stunned by this unexpected statement, the person beside her had already stepped out of the vehicle and walked away.

[1] 天人永隔 “tian ren yong ge.” 天 “tian” is referring to heaven. 人 means “person” or “man” and is referring to the mortal world. 永隔 means “to be forever separated.” So, a person has gone to heaven and those remaining in the mortal world are forever separated from him.

[2] 我本将心向明月，奈何明月照沟渠. The moon is a metaphor for the person you choose to give your love/loyalty/genuine feelings to, but the moon still will not shine upon you and has chosen to shine instead on a channel of dirty water. “I have offered up my sincere feeling to you, but you have chosen to disregard them and turn your attention elsewhere.”

[3] 新婚快乐 “xin hun kuai le.” 新婚 means “newly married” and 快乐 means “happy.” There really is no English equivalent. It is something along the lines of, “Wishing you happiness in this time as a newlywed couple.” The way Zhousheng Chen wrote it, it is almost greeting card style, like how someone would write happy birthday, hence my somewhat strange translation, where I chose to keep the feeling behind what he said at the expense of awkward word choices.

[4] May 11th. In Chinese, May is literally called “fifth month” and the date, May 11 is literally written, “fifth month, eleventh day.” Hence, you could contract that day into the numbers, 511. Five-eleven in Chinese is spoken as “wu shi yi.” An older, more archaic form of “I” or “my” in Chinese is 吾 “wu.” So, 511 “wǔ shí yī” sounds similar to, or as Zhousheng Chen had said, is homophonic with 吾时宜 “wú Shí Yí” which means “My Shi Yi.” The differences lies only in the tones of the “wu” and “yi”.

[5] 姐姐 “jie jie.” Literally this means “big sister” and is a way to address a girl who is older but of the same generation as you. This would normally be very commonplace, but in the Zhou family, everyone has been addressing Shi Yi as “Miss Shi Yi” and this sudden greeting from Xiao Ren is significantly more friendly

and close.

[6] The original Chinese text is 靡曼皓齿, 郑卫之音, 务以自乐, 命之曰伐性之斧. It is quoted from 吕氏春秋 “Lü Shi Chun Qiu” [“Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals”], which is an encyclopedia of the knowledge of the time, ranging from the various beliefs and customs to philosophies on numerous matters including state, society, military, economy, human nature, *etc.* It was compiled in the Warring States period by Lü Buwei, prime minister of the Qin state, in approximately 239 BCE. Xiao Ren offers a great explanation of the overall meaning of this. “The music of Zheng and Wei” is referring to the two states of Zheng and Wei during the Spring and Autumn period of China, where their folk music was reputed to be uncultured.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
24 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues



Additional Comments:

I struggled over how to translate the anniversary date chosen by Zhousheng Chen, so hopefully you guys like it as much as I do. It is actually a terribly sweet gesture, to me at least. Zhousheng Chen’s nature is not romantic by any stretch, and for him to come up with this romantic anniversary date that sounds like “My Shi Yi” is completely unexpected. The way he tells her the date and hints at the meaning without explaining in detail as well as that way of giving her the rings with the note were just geeky... and very Zhousheng Chen. But very adorable in his own way.

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 8.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 8.1

[June 10, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [42 Comments](#)



There are so many things that I love about this chapter. I'll let you read through without me spoiling it for you, and you can read my comments at the back end if you'd like.

Chapter 8.1 – Inevitable Times of Parting (1)

This place was more peaceful and quiet than expected.

Shi Yi was very glad that, although his mother had requested that she accompany her the whole time, she did not speak again. Shi Yi was genuinely reverent when she offered up her incense. With palms and fingers pressed together prayerfully, she knelt on the kneeling cushion, which already had two deep permanent indentations on them, and bowed three times worshipfully to Buddha.

Raising her head again, she looked at the smiling Buddha statue. It was said that, how one's eyes viewed Buddha was different when comparing one who believed in him as opposed to someone who did not believe or a good person as opposed to an evil one. Compassionate, merciful, smiling, and numerous other descriptions, but in her memory, the Buddha always had a slight smile and that never changed.

She suddenly wondered, why was it planned this way?

She remembered everything, but Zhousheng Chen did not remember any of it.

When Shi Yi knelt down, she had forgotten about her knee that was still recovering, and only after she was rising back to her feet did she feel some pain. A hand came and supported her by her upper arm, helping her back up. "If there is a next time, you do not need to do that just so you can wear a cheongsam. You actually also look very nice wearing a tracksuit." He still remembered, that day he had taken the short rest at her home, when he stepped out of the guest room, Shi Yi had been wearing a light blue tracksuit as she sat cross-legged in a slightly darkened room and watched television with a headset on.

In particular, before she had noticed him, she had a little gesture where she would cover her mouth as she laughed at those scenes in the television drama she was watching.

Even now, he could still clearly remember that image.

"It's okay. I didn't completely remove all the bandage, so there should be no problem." She asked quietly, "I didn't see you just now?"

"I am an atheist," he lowered his voice and answered her, "so I stood outside the main hall of the temple and enjoyed the scenery."

The two of them walked out of the main hall. An ancient temple of a thousand years. Even simply standing in that place allowed peace to gradually settle into the heart.

"But I very much believe in Buddhism," she laughed. "What should we do

then?”

He turned back to glance at the Buddha in the main hall. “I completely respect that.”

“What do you see?” She was curious.

“What do I see?”

“I mean, when you look at him, what does he look like to you?”

Because of Shi Yi’s question, Zhousheng Chen looked slightly longer at the statue. “Compassion.”

She gazed at his face from the side, not saying a word.

For some people, even if they had forgotten everything and their voice and appearance had changed, who they were within them would not change.

At that moment, a shadow of the past seemed to superimpose itself on the him who was before her right now. That shadow had once said, Shakayamuni gave up his wife and child to embark on the ways of Buddhism because of the compassion he felt towards living beings^[1]. She clearly remembered these words of his, and hence, she never once blamed him for what he had said: “never forsook the world, only forsook Eleven.”

Noticing her silence, Zhousheng Chen lowered his head and looked back at her. “What’s wrong? Is that not the same as what you see?”

“Not really the same.”

“What is it that you see?”

“He’s smiling,” she said softly. “It looks like he really likes me so that’s why he’s always smiling.”

A look of surprise flashed across his face and then quickly became laughter.

His gaze fell from her eyes down to her ring finger. Her fingers were very slender and creamy in skin tone, and it looked very nice when she wore that type of ring.

There was a mottled, white stone balustrade where they were standing. He

seemed to be concerned that the sun was beating down on her and lead her into a shaded place. Their location was relatively secluded. The whole time, he kept her company and conversed with her, as if he was worried she might be bored. After so many days of spending time with him, she perceived that Zhousheng Chen should actually be someone who was not very talkative, especially when it came to making unnecessary small talk.

Apart from when he was with her. When they were together, he would always think of things to continue to talk about with her.

He was making great efforts, this she could tell, and so, she too was willing to work hard and make the effort for him.

Lunch was in a restaurant at the foot of the mountain. Zhou Wenxing walked beside her and explained to her in a low tone that because her mother was a devoted believer in Buddhism, many years ago, she had built this place specifically for serving and hosting the members of the Zhousheng family and their friends.

Naturally, their meal was a vegetarian one.

When lunch was finished, one of the guests who had come today heard that the girl whom Zhousheng Chen was soon to be betrothed to was present, so right then and there, he wrote a piece of calligraphy artwork[2]. Zhousheng Chen did not know the man, but his mother considerably informed them that this person was a friend of Zhousheng Chen's father and calligraphy written by his hand was of great worth.

This gift was presented so unexpectedly that when Shi Yi received it, she realized that she had nothing on her she could give in return[3].

In a whispered voice, she asked Zhousheng Chen what she should do, but he was unconcerned. In a low tone, he comforted her, this type of situation where a piece of calligraphy was created and presented on the spot was not common, and even if she had no gift to reciprocate, it would not be viewed as being unmannerly. She contemplated for a moment, then addressed the uncle with a smile, "Uncle's calligraphy is something that money cannot buy. Although Shi Yi's paintings cannot compare, I would still like to offer one up in return. I hope

Uncle, you will not reject it.”

Her tone was respectful and polite, and when this uncle finished listening to her, he gave a cheerful laugh and immediately relinquished the place behind the writing desk to her.

Their discussions were taking place up on the second level of the restaurant. Earlier, in order to enjoy the sight of this uncle’s calligraphy, many of the Zhousheng family’s guests who were present had stood up to watch. Now, upon hearing that the future wife of the Zhousheng family’s eldest son was going to create a painting right then and there, they were even more curious.

What sort of painting skills would this girl, who came from such an ordinary background but had such remarkable beauty, possess?

Zhousheng Chen had not expected that Shi Yi would so calmly state that she would paint.

He was very familiar with her past, so familiar that he could clearly remember every one of her classmates’ and friends’ names, from when she was in kindergarten up to university. The information he had about this period of her life did not mention that she had ever studied traditional Chinese painting under anyone.

He stood beside the writing desk and watched as she picked up the brush and pondered briefly.

In her mind, Shi Yi was remembering what she had once been most skilled in, those things that he had once taught her with his own hand, those still lifes he most loved. And then, very naturally, she brought her brush to paper.

Initially, it was reed, a single stem with many leaves.

Layer after layer was painted without pause, as if she had painted this same thing countless times. So adept was her brush technique it was astonishing.

When she had finished painting the base of the reed, the tip of her writing brush paused briefly. The brush was cleansed in water, then dipped lightly in ink before dabbing it against the edge of the ink plate to remove some of the excess. The brush was brought back to the paper again and it was now a lotus flower painted in the “boneless” style[\[4\]](#). Gradually, on that paper, a single stem of a

newly blossomed lotus flower was brought into being.

Those who were not knowledgeable would say that this painting was truly elegant and beautiful.

The exceptions were that particular uncle and his few friends, whose expressions slowly changed from encouragement given by an elder to approval and, finally, to undisguised amazement and praise.

It was a painting of a lotus flower and reeds. Her brushwork was free, light, and graceful while her style gave a sense of purity.

She was worried that she was holding up everyone's time and had deliberately worked faster. When she finally completed the entire painting, that uncle could not help shaking his head and sighing, "Such a pity. It's a pity that this was painted a little too hurriedly. However, it is still a wonderful piece worthy of being placed into a collection." The uncle told her in a nonchalant tone, "Miss Shi Yi, do not forget to put your signature on it. I will most certainly treasure this in my collection."

She nodded. Once again, she cleansed the brush, then signed her name on the painting.

As she was about to set down the brush, the uncle unexpectedly became inspired and asked if she would mind if he wrote a poem to complement the painting. Shi Yi, naturally, did not object to this. The uncle took the brush, and from it flowed two lines of poetry. Out of respect for the painting's artist, though, he refused to sign his name beside the poem.

No one had expected that the future wife of the Zhousheng family's eldest son would have such painting skill.

As a result of this highly esteemed uncle, the Zhou family members and longtime friends present all seemed to view Shi Yi with a newfound respect and even one by one started to jokingly say that they would personally pay a visit to her to beseech for a painting. She was not skilled in socializing and found it even more difficult to handle his family's various manners of speaking and expressions. Eventually, she simply did not know what to say anymore and

started casting frequent looks over at Zhousheng Chen, using her eyes to plead to him for help.

He seemed to find this quite amusing, but seeing her looking so pitiable, he found an excuse and left first with her.

After they were sitting in the car, he recalled her painting and also that expression of unease on her face even though she was being praised, and he still could not help chuckling as he looked over at the person sitting beside him.

Shi Yi detected his laughter and grumbled, "Stop laughing at me."

"It is very funny," he replied with a laugh. "The painting clearly was very nicely done, but you are acting as if it was humiliating. Very funny."

"You think it was good, too?" She looked at him.

"Extremely good. Under whose tutelage did you study traditional Chinese painting?"

She froze at his question but quickly covered up her emotions. "I don't have a teacher. Somebody just gave me some albums of paintings. I liked them, so I shut myself up in a room and practiced as a way of passing the time."

He made no secret of his surprise at this.

"I'm really talented, am I not?" She continued to lead his thinking astray.

He could only shake his head and sigh, "It can only be explained by talent, then."

She smiled. In the ten years of devoting her heart to learning painting, she was most proficient in painting the lotus.

And he was that lotus flower[\[5\]](#).

By the time they returned to the old manorhouse, it was the afternoon, when the bright sun's strong rays beat down from high above. Zhousheng Chen told her to go back to her room to change first while he sat down in the open-plan study on the second floor and finished up the final handover work required for the knowledge exchange project in Xi'an. When Shi Yi stepped out of the room

after following his instructions and changing into a tracksuit, she saw that he was on the phone talking about subjects she did not understand.

However, at the end of the conversation, he suddenly handed the phone to her, telling her that He Shan wanted to say goodbye to her.

Shi Yi took the phone from him. He Shan's voice was heard, sounding rather excited and also somewhat anxious. "Um, yeah... Shi Yi... Wait, no, it should be Shimu ['teacher-mother'][\[6\]](#)." Shi Yi gave an "mm" in answer and cast a furtive glance at Zhousheng Chen as her cheeks grew slightly warm.

"Such a pity that Teacher Zhousheng needed to leave suddenly. But 'one who is teacher for one day is regarded as father for a lifetime,' so Shi Yi, you are forever our Shimu, too." He Shan laughed, "Hehe, you know? Teacher Zhousheng is our idol, that type that you just look at him and get the impression that he's one of those scientists who would never get married and have children. We all felt that it would be so weird if he got married. But once it was put in our minds that that person was you, we also thought you guys were a perfect match — the smart scholar and the beautiful girl[\[7\]](#), ah."

He Shan continued on with his prattling.

Listening to him, Shi Yi could not hold back a grin.

Seeing her smile, Zhousheng Chen, with great interest, sat down in front of her and watched her talk on the phone.

Shi Yi silently mouthed: *He is so longwinded.*

He smiled, stretched out his arm, and patted her lightly on her forehead.

It was a very natural motion, but once his hand touched her, he did not want to move it away. Slowly, it slid down from her forehead and followed the contour of her cheek until it touched her lips. Shi Yi did not move, allowing herself to feel his motions and stare into his deep black eyes.

With his eyes, he sought her permission.

Shi Yi wordlessly closed her own eyes.

He gazed carefully at her for a moment.

When he was young, he had recited "Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals",

in which it was written, “The charms of beauty; gleaming teeth; the music of Zheng and Wei — these are pursued for the pleasure they bring” [8].

But how many people were truly deserving of the words, “charms of beauty, gleaming teeth”?

Zhousheng Chen quietly leaned in and kissed her, not paying any regards to whether the telephone call had been hung up yet. Being so close to her, he could even hear that young fellow, He Shan still blathering repeatedly, something about “the smart scholar and the beautiful girl.” He could not help laughing as he kissed her. Pulling away from her slightly, he directed his words towards the phone. “Alright now. Send over that dissertation that you wanted me to look over. Proofread it once yourself first. Last time, you had too many English words that were misspelled.”

After saying this, he took the mobile phone she was holding in her hand, hung up the call, and set the phone down off to the side.

“Continue?” he asked in a low voice.

Shi Yi had just opened her eyes, but when she heard him say this, she immediately shut them tightly again.

A crimson color spread slowly from her ears.

Every time he kissed her, he would always first ask her permission. This was clearly such a rigid approach, but right in this very moment, with such a soft tone, it inexplicably seemed to give the illusion that he was being flirtatious. It was a very bizarre, serious way of... being flirtatious.

[1] In Buddhist beliefs, Shakayamuni was born a prince and had a wife and child, but after becoming aware of human suffering, he renounced his princely status and left his family in a spiritual search for the solution to the suffering. He eventually attained enlightenment and came to be called the Buddha.

[2] Calligraphy, or the art of writing with brush and ink, is a traditional visual art form in China. Calligraphy is admired and displayed just as paintings are. This

guest, who on the spot wrote calligraphy to present as a piece of artwork as a gift, would be like someone taking brush and paint and creating a painting on the spot with spectators surrounding.

[3] There is a saying, 礼尚往来”li shang wang lai,” which means “courtesy demands reciprocity.” In Chinese etiquette, when a gift is given, an expectation is that it will be reciprocated, although not always immediately. In addition, the reciprocate gift should be something similar in value.

[4] 无骨 “wu gu.” (More commonly called 没骨.) This literally means “boneless.” This style of painting is also known as “mogu.” In traditional Chinese painting, as opposed to “boned” style where the subject of the painting is first outlined and then filled in later (which is said to sometimes make the painting seem more rigid and formal), “boneless” paintings are composed of color washes with no outlines. “Boneless” painting requires more skill and mastery.

[5] The lotus flower has been esteemed in Chinese culture. There is an idiom used to describe the lotus flower: 出淤泥而不染 ”chu yu ni er bu ran” that translates as “to have grown out of the mud but yet is not sullied.” The flower grows in the muddy swamp waters, but yet it rises up out of it to blossom into an untainted, beautiful flower. It is symbolic of purity of heart and mind, regardless of the adverse surroundings. It is also intimately connected to Buddhism, as the holy seat of Buddha, and represents enlightenment.

[6] 师母 “shi mu.” Literally means “teacher-mother.” The wife of one’s teacher.

[7] 才子佳人 “cai zi jia ren.” 才子 “cai zi” means gifted scholar while 佳人 “jia ren” means beautiful woman. This is actually an idiom used to describe an ideal couple, a pairing of a man with brains and a woman with good looks.

[8] See footnote [6] in chapter 7.3. The “charms of beauty, gleaming teeth” is talking about outward appearance so extremely beautiful it is beguiling.

Additional Comments:

My absolute favourite part about this chapter is the imagery of Shi Yi, head

down at the desk, completely immersed in her own memories — of him and what he had taught her — as the painting flows naturally off of her brush. There's something peaceful and beautiful, like time has turned back, and I can only imagine Zhousheng Chen must have been captivated by her in that moment.

And then, there's all the other little hints of a growing romance and the efforts the two are putting into it: ZSC always trying to make sure he is talking to her, his amusement and open laughter at her for her embarrassment, her annoyed response and telling him to stop laughing, and a somewhat naughty kiss when she is still on the phone. Ah, on one side, they are still working hard getting to know one another, but on the other side, they are starting to act much more natural with each other.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

25 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 8.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 8.2

[June 13, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [57 Comments](#)



Alright, peeps, shoot me all your natural cough remedies. I've done the honey water and waiting it out, but I'm just not getting better so I will try anything to be able to sleep at night.

Love shouldn't be about tactics or maneuvers. Seize the moment. Shi Yi has such an ability to filter out everything unnecessary and seize what is important to her. ♡

Chapter 8.2 – Inevitable Times of Parting (2)

There was sunlight shining on her arm. So warm.

His hand followed the contour of her shoulder and slid down to her wrist. He gripped it gently. "You should eat more."

She gave an "mm," her cheeks so red they seemed rather hot.

"I may have to leave the country for a period of time."

"Because of that incident?"

“No.” Zhousheng Chen let out a chuckle. “The intention behind that incident was, indeed, to make me leave this place. However, my purpose for leaving is actually for my research project.”

“Halogen-free flame retardant silane-crosslinked POE composite materials?”

Shi Yi had truly forced herself to strictly memorize that awkward to pronounce name.

Zhousheng Chen had not expected that the name would roll off her lips so smoothly and, with a bit of surprise, gave her a brief intense gaze. He seemed as if he wanted to ask her something. Several seconds passed, though, and he decided to let it be. “That is Xi’an’s research project, not what I have been working on these last several years.”

She looked at him puzzledly.

“To explain it simply, these last few years, I have been in one of the core cities of Europe reproducing the environment of Venus to study the feasibility of human habitation.”

She gave an “oh.”

Hearing it this way, it was easier to understand than that other name.

But why did it seem even more distant from her? “Feasibility of human habitation on Venus? People can live on Venus?”

“The surface temperature is scorching, approximate 480°C, and its atmospheric pressure is nearly 90 times that of the Earth’s,” he answered simply. When he spoke about these things, his voice sounded like one from a science audiobook. “However, its diameter, mass, and even position are most similar to Earth’s. In the solar system, it can be considered our twin. Therefore, in the future, there is a chance that humans can inhabit it.”

She gave another “oh.”

He laughed, “Is this boring to listen this?”

“No.” She shook her head. “It’s kind of interesting. It’s because I don’t know any of it, that’s why it’s interesting.”

He continued to tell her a little more.

She had quite a good memory, so although she basically did not understand what he was saying, she could remember it all. For example, with its atmospheric circulation, the cloud layer would do a complete rotation around the planet in approximately four days; it had polar vortices; and so on, as well as his study on the distribution of atmospheric trace compounds. In this period while he would be away, she wanted to secretly study up so that when he occasionally mentioned the topic, she would not have to sit there foolishly in the sun and just listen.

“So then... when are you coming back?”

He replied, “In three months.”

She nodded, thinking three months would pass quickly.

“Shi Yi?”

She responded with an “mm.”

“Why me?”

She did not understand. “Why?”

“In Baiyun airport, why did you want to know me?”

As Zhousheng Chen spoke, his hand inadvertently grazed the eighteen prayer beads on her wrist. The slightly cool feeling to the touch from those green jade beads produced some peculiar sensations in him... He furrowed his brows, not quite accustomed to that momentary feeling of dazedness. It seemed as if something was about to emerge in his mind, yet he could not at all even decipher where it was headed.

As it turned out, Shi Yi, too, had fallen into a short moment of silence and after a while, finally answered, “It was love at first sight.”

She was unable to explain those things of the past that existed now in history books.

And so, she could only use this as a way to describe the beginning of their story.

Three months.

After Zhousheng Chen had finished briefly making arrangements for matters that would require attention during this period, the next day, he really did depart.

He only told her approximately when he would return, but the whole time, he never once mentioned about bringing her along.

She speculated, this project he had spoken about was perhaps only one of the reasons for his departure. The family he was born into and its existence was so mysteriously abnormal. Such a serious incident had occurred, yet it did not seem to have caused any tremors in the family. Besides those uninvited guests that late night and a series of explosive allegations of being connected to and a suspect in a crime, no one mentioned any more of that girl, Tang Xiaofu, who had so easily lost her life.

That family clan seemed to be in a separate world that followed its own set of rules.

If she had not had him in her memories, how could she even dare come close to a family such as this one?

Soon after he had left, summer made an early arrival.

Aside from three telephone calls each day, he seemed far removed from her world.

To increase the exposure and influence of the company, Mei Lin had spent the entire month organizing recruiting events. Since she had won an award, Shi Yi had no choice but to be cooperative and do some work for the events. Actually, she only needed to record a promotional piece, and she was still firm that she would not participate in any of the events themselves.

That day, Mei Lin gave her more than a dozen different recordings to listen to. Most of these were from scripts the contestants had written themselves.

“That year, the Buddha sat in Lotus position below the Bodhi tree. He used

forty-nine days to attain enlightenment. He understood then, that the four Great Elements are void[\[1\]](#), and he emptied himself of love, hate, and ignorance[\[2\]](#). I believe, even if we should know each other for 490 days, 4900 days, 49000 days, I still would not have the courage to take up the Lotus position and to choose to have a golden body[\[3\]](#) but, in exchange, forget you..." As she listened to the demo, she suddenly was moved by it.

Mei Lin smiled. "It's a similar feeling to when I listened to your demo. There were so many demo tapes, but only your recitation of 'Rhapsody of the Imperial Park' made us feel that this voice was truly pleasant to listen to, despite us all being left in a fog over what you were reciting."

Shi Yi laughed, "I'm most familiar with 'Rhapsody of the Imperial Park' so when I read it, I have the most feeling."

"Shi Yi?"

"Hmm?"

"That scientist fiancé of yours..."

She turned around, held out her hand, and wagged it in front of her. "Take a careful look at which finger the ring is on. Status: married."

"Married?" Mei Lin could not believe it. "These last two months, you've been hanging out with me. That's considered 'married'? Where's the house? The car? What about the honeymoon? And most importantly, where's your Mr. Chemistry?"

"He's at the National Institute for Astrophysics in Rome..." Shi Yi answered truthfully.

"Astrophysics?" Mei Lin repeated somewhat blankly. "Doesn't he do chemistry?"

"The dividing line isn't that clear cut. Right now, his main work is to investigate trace components on the surface of Venus and do semi-micro analysis..." She tried as much as possible to talk in layman's terms, and in reality, she would not be able to speak about this very technically anyway.

Mei Lin was soaking in the jargon and terms, still unable to comprehend what

Venus had to do with Shi Yi's wedding.

"I never knew that your type was a scientist whose aspiration is the progress of mankind. Such a great, selfless love, eh? That type of person probably views romantic love – the type that's between a man and a woman – very lightly."

Great, selfless love?

Her gaze drifted away and fell on the large, open space in front of the building. "Maybe. Sometimes, when I'm reading something historical, I will think, if I lived in ancient times, I would definitely fall for a man who held the wellbeing of mankind in his heart. A man, ultimately, should do something in his life that has nothing to do with fame, money, or romance. Being lovey dovey everyday... doesn't really suit me."

Mei Lin said something else but she did not pay attention.

She saw, out in that open area, a familiar-looking couple. It was his younger brother, Zhou Wenchuan and Wang Man. In the hustle and bustle of the throngs of people, the two of them looked like any other ordinary pair of lovers as they talked softly to one another and quickly got into a car and left.

Shi Yi was too intent in her watching so that even Mei Lin noticed them.

She unexpectedly remarked, "Hey! I know that man."

"You know him?"

Mei Lin gave her a brief narration: a graduate fresh from university had come to work at the company, but the direct supervisor was very harsh and the new graduate was reprimanded everyday. Suddenly one day, the man they just saw came to the company wanting to discuss some matters with the highest boss. Of course, Mei Lin had no knowledge regarding the specifics of their discussion, but the only thing she did know was that after their big boss kept bowing and scraping as he showed the man out, that new graduate was then transferred directly into the high performance project group.

"Afterwards, Boss sighed and said that Hong Kong is called 'Li Family City', the city that belongs to the Li family[\[4\]](#), but the family behind this man is even worse to mess with. His background is by no means limited to a certain place or city..." Mei Lin continued, but it was to herself, "You say, why is that girl bothering to

stay in our company when she has such a strong backing? Well, I guess, she just feels like it and likes hanging around here for fun...”

Shi Yi remembered that night.

Faced with all those sudden allegations, Zhousheng Chen’s responses and how he had resolved the matter had been unassailable.

She thought silently, this description by Mei Lin was not an exaggeration. This surname of theirs seemed very common, and people normally would not even bother to look for any gossip or media scoops on them.

Their existence seemed as if it was a secret, and before, she never would have even had any opportunity to come in contact with them.

Even now, Shi Yi still did not dare tell her parents that she and he, according to the law, were husband and wife now and her citizenship had been changed as well. If too many unimaginable things occurred, she was afraid that her parents would feel even more aversion towards his family.

After lunch, she was forced to stay and help Mei Lin review demos.

The two of them listened and discussed them until soon it was two o’clock. Zhousheng Chen’s phone call promptly came in. She motioned with her hand, then jogged into a small room and closed the door. Their conversations were quite a bit longer now than when they initially started their phone calls. Sometimes, as entertaining stories and tidbits for her to listen to, he would even talk about things that had nothing to do with her.

Of course, this was at her request.

After all, there were not many common points between their two lives, so it was inevitable that they would often not have any topics to talk about. One day, however, Shi Yi finally could not help suggesting, “Actually, you can tell me about some little things that happen to or around you. For instance, what did you eat today? Or where are you feeling unwell? Or the weather. Anything you want, really. That way, we’ll have more things to talk about, and I can learn more about you.”

She thought, normal couples all did that, communicating and interacting through trifling, little matters and not finding it boring.

In the beginning, Zhousheng Chen was not accustomed to this, so she would ask and he would answer. Gradually, though, it started to feel more natural. Conversing with him like this made her feel like she was very close to him, but she also selfishly believed that Zhousheng Chen had never interacted in this way with anyone before.

“This following week, I will be in Bremen, Germany.” Although Zhousheng Chen’s voice was insipid, he tried as best as possible to speak gently to her. “Would you like to come?”

“Yes,” she answered without any hesitation. “Approximately when are you thinking?..... But will there not be enough time to get a visa?”

“No,” he laughed. “You won’t need to do any paperwork to go to Germany.”

She suddenly comprehended. She had forgotten that he had changed her citizenship.

For the first time, she discovered a benefit of this change. It allowed her to see him anytime, anywhere.

Zhousheng Chen explained briefly that the purpose of his trip was a conference, a Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research[\[5\]](#), that would be held from Monday through to Sunday, and his schedule would be very full. While Shi Yi listened to him tell her that he may not have too much time to spend with her, her mind was already beginning to wander, wondering what she should prepare and what she should say when she saw him.

After their phone call had ended, she very quickly informed Mei Lin that she would be leaving for one week.

When Mei Lin heard her reason, she was very displeased with Shi Yi’s eagerness. “Shi Yi, you know, the relationship and interactions between a man and a woman require technique. Even if, legally, you are already husband and wife, you still need to use some tactics when appropriate. Don’t always just blindly accommodate him...”

“Mei Lin, Mei Lin,” Shi Yi laughed, stopping her from preaching further, “I was

26 before I finally met him. Even if I am lucky enough to live until I'm 80, that's only another 54 years left, 19710 days. You said yourself, he's in research. It's very easy for him to need to leave like this and be gone for several months. That means, the actual amount of time we have together may be less than ten thousand days." She was half-serious, half-joking as she informed Mei Lin, "I don't have time. I don't have time to use tactics, to use techniques. I need to seize every minute and second and just be with him, do you understand?"

[1]四大皆空 "si da jie kong". The four Great Elements in Buddhism are earth, water, fire, and wind and represent, respectively, the sensory qualities of solidity, liquidity/cohesion heat/temperature, and mobility. Buddhism views the world as nothing more than these elements arranged in space, and our perception of the world is a mental interpretation of these things. The concept, therefore, that "the four Great Elements are void" can be interpreted, very simplistically, as the world is merely an illusion. Note: I am not the least bit informed in Buddhism, so please do not take this as proper Buddhist doctrine.

[2]爱恨痴 "ai hen dian chi." In Buddhist teaching, these are the "Three Poisons" considered to be the cause of suffering. 爱 "Love" or "attachment" is referring to the mindset of attachment to loved ones. 恨 "Hatred" or "aversion" is referring to the mindset of hatred to enemies. 痴 "Ignorance" is the root from which attachment and aversion arise. Note: Again, please do not take this as proper Buddhist doctrine, just something to help you in understanding the story's context.

[3] The Lotus position is the meditative position of the Buddha, a cross-legged position with the ankles on the opposite thigh and hands in lap. When Buddha achieved enlightenment, his enlightened body was said to have skin that was luminous and golden-hued. The meaning of this particular recording be paraphrased to say, "No matter how much time should pass, I don't think I would ever have the courage to choose to forget you in order to attain enlightenment."

[4] 李家城 "Lǐ jiā chéng." Literally, this means the city of the Li family. In Mandarin (and Cantonese), it is pronounced exactly the same as the name of Li Ka-shing 李嘉诚 (Mandarin pinyin is also Lǐ Jiā Chéng), who is a Hong Kong

tycoon and (I believe) currently Asia’s richest man. Li’s companies make up a significant portion of the Hong Kong stock exchange.

[\[5\]](#) Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) is an interdisciplinary scientific organization concerned with space research on an international scale.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
26 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 8.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 8.3

[June 17, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [25 Comments](#)



Thank you, everyone, for all your natural cough remedies. I'm working down the list and trying them out. I have gotten a little better (at least I'm not up the whole night coughing), so I will credit all of you with the improvement. Who needs google when I have all of you? Unfortunately, I will be missing my next posting on Friday night/Saturday morning. I've been trying to keep up with my translations despite being sick, but alas, my body finally has to concede defeat for one posting. I will be back next Tuesday night/Wednesday morning. My sincerest apologies.

Shi Yi has left China to visit Zhousheng Chen. (I have a soft spot for scenes in a c-novel taking place outside of China.) Anyone ever been to Bremen, Germany before?

Chapter 8.3 – Inevitable Times of Parting (3)

Her flight arrived on schedule in Bremen.

Following his instructions, she went to collect her luggage and then, with

nowhere to go, she went to the main hall to wait. She was sitting directly across from a shop, and in its window, she could see all different sorts of people inside the shop as well as her own faint reflection. Tilting her head slightly to the side, she smiled at herself. *Zhousheng Chen, it's been two months since we saw each other.*

Two months. Sixty-one days.

The outline of many figures would intermix in that window, all coming or going.

She saw several people appear in the mirror-like window, including him. Today, his dress was very simple and very ordinary, a white shirt, black pants, and glasses. Shi Yi quickly turned around and saw that the remaining stern-looking men with him were all wearing dark blue dress shirts and two were even carrying black briefcases. Only the man, who looked to be approximately thirty-five or thirty-six years old, walking side by side with Zhousheng Chen was more casual in appearance

When she rose to her feet, he had already walked up to her.

“My wife, Shi Yi.” Zhousheng Chen made a slight gesture, introducing her to the man beside him, and at the same time, he looked over at her. “This is my university classmate as well as my old friend, Mei Xing, courtesy name, Rugu.” This name was rather unique. It was relatively rare to find someone with a courtesy name^[1]. Since Zhousheng Chen had introduced him in this way, she construed that he must be a longtime friend of the Zhou family as well.

Shi Yi smiled cordially. “Mei Rugu? Wasted willows, withered lotuses, but ‘mei ru gu’ [the plum blossoms are as before]^[2].” Such a wonderful name. She felt embarrassed to praise his name directly, so she used this subtle way to express her admiration. Quickly, she added, “Hello Mr. Mei.”

Mei Xing appeared rather surprised. He glanced over at Zhousheng Chen and bumped an elbow against his arm.

“Yes?” Zhousheng Chen laughed.

“You’re a lucky guy.”

With slight curiosity, Mei Xing politely asked Shi Yi, “Miss Shi Yi, the first time you met your husband, were you able to understand the meaning behind his courtesy name so quickly as well?”

Shi Yi shook her head. “I did not know he has a courtesy name.”

“My apologies,” Zhousheng Chen quickly said. “I do not use it often, so I forgot to tell you.”

His apology was very proper and polite.

The expression on the face of the man in front of her had changed from surprise to admiration and now was replaced with puzzlement and wariness.

Fortunately, Mei Xing understood propriety and did not ask further.

They left the airport and went to the hotel. Upon making all the appropriate arrangements, he left Shi Yi with Mei Xing, telling her only that there were some procedures that Mei Xing would be helping her to sort out and complete. After Zhousheng Chen had left, four or five men systematically opened up their brief cases and computers. Mei Xing began patiently explaining to her what she was about to take over, which were mostly Zhousheng Chen’s personal assets. The numerous and complicated words and phrases used gradually caused Shi Yi to feel dizzy as she listened to them, and she started to gather that this Mei Xing must be serving as his personal financial advisor.

And these other people were, in fact, just Mei Xing’s assistants.

When she had finished listening to everything, all she could comprehend was that he wanted to give her some of his assets. Exactly how this was to be done was explained very clearly to her by Mei Xin. All the assets, whether they were movable or immovable property, did not require her to personally manage them. Everything that they were doing today was simply a formality.

“Trust me, all the assets under his name are clean.” Mei Xing removed his glasses, folded them up, and tucked them into his jacket pocket.

Shi Yi did not truly comprehend what she was hearing, but she was getting the vague sense that by “clean”, he meant in comparison to the other people in the

Zhou family. Mei Xing wanted to laugh as he saw the look in her eyes that showed she wanted to ask but did not dare to. “What’s wrong? Don’t understand? And afraid to ask?”

She nodded.

“Actually, there are some things I do not understand either and also am nervous to ask.” Mei Xing placed the cap back on his fountain pen and then set it beside the document. “How much did you know about him before you became his legal wife? And, from what I understand, it was a marriage that had not yet received the nod of approval from the Zhou family.”

This question came as no surprise.

The only thing that was not expected was that Zhousheng Chen had not explained to him the actual situation.

Shi Yi thought for a moment. “Besides knowing that he likes science and research, I don’t know anything about him.”

What she did understand was the feeling he gave to people. Apart from that, there was nothing about him that was within her expectations. She even had a faint inkling that what she had come in contact with was just the surface, those things that were the least important. The true core of who he was — his background, his character, and even his likes and preferences — she knew absolutely nothing about.

Mei Xing’s eyes seemed very deep as they examined her. After a while, he laughed, “His courtesy name is ‘Changfeng.’”

“Changfeng,” she repeated.

“Have you figured out where that name is derived from?”

“From afar, the gale [‘chang feng’] blows in. Great waves rise up, like a lonely field high upon the mountain ridge.”

Mei Xing laughed and finished off the remaining half of that line of poetry. *“Crashing against the shore or ferociously against one another in the narrowed channel.* You really were able to guess from where it was taken.”

“Rhapsody of the Gaotang Shrine[\[3\]](#)” – such a famous poem, it would have

been very surprising for her to not know it.

However, as she reflected deeper upon the meaning behind his courtesy name, it did not seem to be an accurate reflection of Zhousheng Chen's nature. These lines were obviously describing Mount Wu's immense and mighty surging river waters that were unequaled. His temperament, though, was very reserved and detached.

This man, Mei Xing, was born of a traditional background also, and when he spoke, he tended to be quite witty and casual, so their conversation was very enjoyable. At last, after all the official matters had been attended to, he asked her whether she had ever been to Bremen before. Shi Yi shook her head. He seemed very interested in inviting her out for a meal together, but Shi Yi very politely refused and remained alone in the hotel.

She enjoyed the quiet and was not worried about being bored.

There was plenty of time, so she went online and checked some introductions and recommendations for this city, planning that these next few days, when Zhousheng Chen was busy, she could go wander around by herself. With headphones on, she flipped through some websites while occasionally listening to some of the new competition demo recordings that had arrived in her email inbox, and in this way, she whittled away the entire afternoon. Unexpectedly, the faint aroma of tea wafted in, and Shi Yi finally noticed that someone was in the living room.

She stepped out and saw that it was Zhousheng Chen.

She did not know when he had returned, but he was now creating a very pleasant atmosphere as he brewed tea. In front of him was an entire tea set that had likely been brought out not long ago. The water had already boiled and was emitting steam off to one side.

He held the small, exquisite teapot gently in one hand and poured the liquid out from it. Water was added back into it, then it was poured out again.

His motions were very smooth and relaxed. It seemed he had long since grown accustomed to brewing tea for himself. Her eyes quickly rested on one point. She

saw the ring that was now on his ring finger. At the airport, she remembered he had not been wearing it. Did he specifically bring it out because she was here?

Zhousheng heard her footsteps but did not lift his head. He fluidly placed another cup in front of himself and poured some tea into it. “I saw just now that you were very focused with your listening so I did not disturb you.”

She smiled, thinking silently that she did not even know what she had been listening to.

The entire afternoon, thinking about him was the only thing she had done with focus.

Shi Yi sat down beside him.

She could not help staring at the ring on his finger again, and sensing her eyes on him, he turned around to look at her. When he saw where her gaze was, he seemed slightly self-conscious, and with one finger, he twirled the ring that was on his left ring finger. “I took it off a few days ago when I was washing my hands and I lost the one I had originally. This one was delivered just this afternoon.”

She gave an “mm.”

A short explanation that came up out of the blue, but it resolved the uncertainty she had been feeling.

“Shi Yi?”

“Mm-hmm?”

“For dinnertime, would you like to walk around?” he suggested.

It had been his suggestion, so she had assumed that he was very familiar with this place and simply wanted to take her out for a relaxing stroll and keep her company. However, she discovered that he did not even know Bremen as well as she did. That feeling — when someone had suggested that he would keep you company as you strolled around an unfamiliar city but in the end, you ended up being his guide instead — suddenly gave this man, who was already her husband, an additional sense of cuteness in Shi Yi’s eyes.

She speculated, besides scientific research and the matters within his family

clan, was he too busy to look at the world?

Or perhaps, the vantage point from which he viewed the world was different from hers?

The two of them were like travellers who had come here for the first time, and the places they went were all the popular, must-see places of interest. By now it was evening, and the sky was touched by a faint afterglow of the sunset. People who looked like tourists stopped to stand before the beautiful scene and capture their souvenir photos. She led him into a narrow winding street and said, “I was just reading about this place online and thought it seemed very neat.”

There were quaint little wooden houses from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, tucked close to one another, in all sorts of bright colors.



Schnorr Viertel in
Bremen, Germany
([image credit](#))

Some places were so narrow they could only proceed single file.

Because the street beneath their feet was uneven cobblestone, the walk was somewhat strenuous. She was not wearing very high heels, but it was unavoidable that time after again, they would get caught in the gaps between the cobblestones. She stumbled slightly but then a hand reached over and held her firmly. “Walk a little slower.”

As she steadied herself on her feet, an elderly couple could be seen walking

toward them. Zhousheng Chen quickly loosened his hold and put his hand into his pants pocket.

“When are you planning on going back to China?”

“I do not have any specific plans. I would like to go back, but there are still matters that need to be resolved first.”

Shi Yi pondered for a moment, then suggested, “If you do not go back, then we will live together somewhere abroad, alright?”

“Alright,” Zhousheng Chen promised very simply and promptly. “After I have completed the plan for ten years of investment attraction, we can settle down in any city you would like.”

This was the first time he had spoken to her about what he planned to do.

Shi Yi could still remember, the first time she had paid any attention to this investment attraction plan was during the time of the Qing Ming Festival when she and her father had exchanged a few sentences about it in casual conversation. She remembered that her and her father’s assessment of the situation had been, the person who would be able to save the economy from this course of development would need to have the strength and assets to do so as well as a magnanimous heart. She simply had not known that this person would be Zhousheng Chen.

“In these last several years, the cost of labour has risen radically and a lot of companies are starting to pull out of South East Asia. In five to ten years, it’s inevitable that a large number of factories will close and workers will lose their jobs, right? That’s why you want to invest against the trend?” Shi Yi recalled her father’s words. She did not completely understand all these economic matters, but the principles were simple and obvious so she could remember most of it.

He, however, had not expected that she would pay attention to this type of topic. “There are many reasons behind it. For example, the renminbi[\[4\]](#) has been trending upward for six years, and the cost of international trade has increased by 30%. A 30% increase in costs is extremely frightening, and right now, what is needed are policies that will provide assistance. While the US dollar is falling, the renminbi should...”

Shi Yi looked at him, trying hard to understand.

Zhousheng Chen suddenly stopped. Lowering his head, he smiled, “My apologies. This is a seldom opportunity to spend time with you, and I am using it to talk about such boring things.”

She shook her head. “It’s alright. Continue with what you were saying.”

Seeing that she was truly very sincere, he carried on for a few more sentences. As Shi Yi listened to him, she thought, no matter how many cycles of reincarnation she passed through, she would still always love this man. Entrenched in the very bones of this man was the stance that his life was not to be lived for one person, one family, or one surname. In today’s society, such a person would be considered foolish, so foolish that very few people understood him.

She listened to him for a while and then attempted to sum up what he had said. “So, in short, what you want to do is toss money in to just cushion the effects of the inevitable course of events?” Or in other words, use his own money to oppose the market tide. The end result would be very difficult to change, and at most, the collapse of the manufacturing sector would merely be delayed from ten years to fifteen, maybe twenty years.

Zhousheng Chen did not give a direct answer. He sighed contemplatively, “Therefore, the process will be rather painful.”

The “painfulness” he was referring to should be that complicated and difficult, old family clan that had endured dozens of generations of being secluded in order to accumulate such wealth. She feared it would not only be his uncle or mother but that each one of the persons in the family would become his obstacle.

She remembered Zhousheng Chen’s courtesy name and suddenly felt that she had been mistaken in her interpretation.

The core of who this man was, was it not also like an immense and mighty surging river, unequaled by anyone?

More tourists were coming toward them again. The street was too narrow,

and he very naturally took a couple steps backwards to give way to them. At the same time, Shi Yi unexpectedly reached out and gently took his hand. Very rarely did they do anything so intimate outside, and Zhousheng Chen felt somewhat self-conscious.

In a rather pouting voice, Shi Yi complained, “I’m tired. Hold my hand, okay?”

Her Zhousheng Chen was so alluring.

Since he did not understand the way a relationship between a man and a woman should work, then let her, who knew just ever so slightly more than him, move closer to him, one step at a time.

He suddenly seemed to grow amused, and he relaxed. “Alright, I will hold your hand.”

[1] 字 “zi” or 表字 “biao zi.” Called “courtesy name” or “style name.” Upon birth, a person is bestowed a 名 “given name,” usually by the parents. In ancient China, when a man turned 20 and came of age, he would get a new “courtesy name.” This courtesy name was to be used by peers and others of the same generation, while the original given name became reserved for elders to use to address the man. The courtesy name sometimes was given by someone else, but it could also be self-chosen. This practice has mainly become obsolete in present day.

[2] 残柳枯荷，梅如故. His surname 梅 “Mei” is actually the character for plum blossoms, while his courtesy name 如故 “ru gu” means “as before”, so therefore, his surname and courtesy name combined means “plum blossoms as before.” Plum blossoms bloom in late winter/early spring, and they are thought to be the most vibrant when blooming against a backdrop of winter snow. They are symbolic of purity, beauty, as well as perseverance and hope. In regards to that poetic sentence that Shi Yi said, in the winter, when the willow trees have dropped their leaves to look barren and the lotus flowers have long since withered away, the plum blossoms still open beautifully and vibrantly as before, beautiful, pure and persevering in the harsh coldness of winter. Shi Yi is using this simple, beautiful, poetic line to compliment Mei Xing’s courtesy name and its poetic meaning and symbolism.

[3] 高唐赋 “Gao Tang Fu” or “Rhapsody of the Gaotang Shrine.” A poem written by Song Yu during the Warring States period. The poem is well-known, with extended descriptions of mountain landscapes, in which it describes King Xiang of Chu’s encounter with a beautiful goddess who says she is from 巫山 Mount Wu (sometimes called Mt. Wushan, Wushan, or Witches’ Hill). These particular lines are describing the surging river waters as a strong wind blows in from afar [a ‘chang feng’], causing huge waves to rise up and come crashing down.

[4] Official currency of China

Additional Comments:

A little talk about Zhousheng Chen’s courtesy name: Because courtesy names are chosen when the person has reached adulthood (age 20, traditionally), there is often a reflection of reality in the name, whether it be the person’s personality, what he hopes to become, *etc.* It’s highly likely that Zhousheng Chen chose this name himself and not someone else. ‘Changfeng’ means a strong wind that comes in from afar, and it was chosen in reference to those two lines from “Rhapsody of the Gaotang Shrine.” In the poem, a strong wind gusted in and whipped up havoc, creating giant, crashing waves of an overwhelming force in a previously calm river. Zhousheng Chen has a burning passion in his heart — the greater good of the people — and he is willing to fight a losing battle if it will prolong the time before the economic disaster occurs and give the people more time to prepare for it. His plan, to inject money into an industry that is destined to doom, is going to bring havoc in his family that had always chosen to be sheltered and secluded from the world, but the abilities and passions he possesses are unequaled forces to be reckoned with. Prior to his coming of age and taking over the Zhou family, how many people knew what Zhousheng Chen planned to do? Probably not many. Likely just his close friends and advisors, but not many who had the authority or status to bestow him his courtesy name. This name and the lines of poetry from which it was taken on the surface seem to contrast his gentlemanly but indifferent manner that he shows people, so I

reckon he chose the name himself, like a concealed way of expressing the plans in his heart.

Thoughts?

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

27 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 9.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 9.1

[June 24, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [40 Comments](#)



The atmosphere created in this chapter is so wonderful, but such a difficult one to translate. It's chapters like these that make me wonder why I chose this novel. :p (By the way, this is the halfway mark of the main story, excluding epilogues.)

I love when Shi Yi surprises Zhousheng Chen with the little things about her.

Chapter 9.1 – How Can Love be Unraveled? (1)

While Shi Yi had still been alone in the hotel, she had already discovered that Zhousheng Chen's day-to-day necessities and clothing were also in this particular hotel suite. In other words, he was not intending for them to stay in separate rooms anymore. During the day, she had not really thought anything of this, but when the two of them returned to the hotel after dinner, she started to become restless and unsettled. Fortunately, it was still early and Mei Xing and his assistants were present, so her thoughts did not jump directly to tonight's time alone with him.

The conversations between the men were somewhat solemn.

Listening to their conversation, she could only understand a smattering of what they were discussing, so instead, she asked him lightly, “Can I make some tea for you?”

Zhousheng Chen smiled, “Is this boring to listen to?”

The corner of her lips turned up. “No, I’ve just noticed that you like tea and I happen to know how to make tea.”

Her voice was rather soft, and subtle veiled feelings could be heard in it, telling him that what she actually wanted was to make him happy. Zhousheng Chen had originally intended to ask her to wait for a few moments for he would be finishing soon, but hearing her say this in such a manner, he suppressed his words. “You have learned the art of tea?”

Shi Yi smiled but did not answer.

Their dialogue attracted the attention of Mei Xing, and he looked at Shi Yi with interest. “I suspect, Zhousheng, that your wife does not just know how to steep tea. Maybe she will give us an even bigger surprise.”

Afraid that he would tease her and give her a hard time, Zhousheng pointed his finger at Mei Xing. “Alright now, you are not allowed to use her as the target of your jokes.”

“I’m not, ah. I just have this feeling that your wife might like tea culture very much.” Mei Xing looked at Shi Yi. “Shi Yi, I, too, really like to drink tea. What’s more, so long as you can execute the method you choose, I can provide you with the tea utensils.”

Shi Yi understood that this man was talking about the different methods of drinking tea throughout the eras.

Those truly were not difficult for her.

She was not a person who liked to showoff. Perhaps it was because Zhousheng Chen was by her side and the one challenging her was his good friend, but she did not want to concede. “I have read Lu Yu’s ‘Classic of Tea^[1]’, and I enjoy studying the various methods of tea preparation. If Mr. Mei, you would like give it a try, it would not be difficult task for me to do.”

Mei Xing was very pleased. “How about cooking tea[2]?”

Shi Yi burst out in a laugh. “Let’s forget about that — putting in seasonings like scallions, ginger, chinese dates, orange peel, dogwood leaves, and mint and heating it to a rolling boil for an extended period of time. It’s not a problem for me to prepare some tea using this method, but I’m afraid you guys wouldn’t drink it.”

With a grin, Mei Xing persuaded, “Just give it a try. It won’t be a big deal.”

Shi Yi thought about that taste, and while she was still hesitating slightly, Zhousheng Chen gave her a gentle pat on her arm. “You can ignore him. Just steeped tea will be fine.”

“Eh?” Mei Xing wagged his hand. “There’s actually a knowledgeable person here right now. How could we waste this chance? Since cooking tea would not be good, I will send someone right now to bring some tea cakes[3] and the tea ware and utensils. We will taste your wife’s boiled tea[4].”

Mei Xing quickly sent an assistant to retrieve the tea ware and tea cakes.

Because of this unexpected suggestion, their conversation topic had turned to tea. Shi Yi sat, and as she listened to their casual discussions on their previous experiences related to tea, the images that were emerging in her mind gradually grew more distinct.

He of the past had once sat leisurely in his study, his graceful hands preparing tea by boiling.

Readying the tea cake, selecting the water, preparing the flame, waiting upon the water, roasting the tea cake, grinding the tea leaves, sifting the ground tea, boiling the tea, and pouring. She had observed him closely, not wanting to miss any gesture, but it had been simply to pass the time. She had watched, he had worked. She had not found it boring in the least.

And now, in this moment, as she did the same, she did not feel agitated or impatient either.

On the contrary, she even enjoyed this long process, where she took what he

had once taught her and presented it back to him.

Mei Xing was a person who loved tea, so much so that he had even prepared four sets of tea ware. And Shi Yi was truly someone who understood tea. From selecting the tea ware in the beginning, to waiting by the flame for the proper water temperature, to ensuring the open flame in which the tea would be toasted was appropriate — all of these were like an artistic performance. Initially, Mei Xing and Zhousheng Chen would exchange a few words, but in the end, both men were watching Shi Yi.

The person within that beautiful artistic scene, however, was engrossed only with doing what she needed to do.

The fragrant aroma of tea wafted over to them, but it merely was an embellishment, bringing color to the scene and making it even more delightful.

Zhousheng Chen was also watching her intently.

He did not understand the thoughts and moods of women, and he even more so did not understand Shi Yi, even though she was already his wife. Why would a girl like her, at twenty-six years of age, still have had no previous romantic relationship? He did not believe in any of those insubstantial explanations such as fate or predestined affinity between two people. But now, only those words could be used to explain the feelings she had for him.

And what did he feel for her?

Before Mei Xing took his leave, he did not at all hide the admiration he had for Shi Yi.

She felt somewhat awkward by his praises and threw frequent looks at Zhousheng Chen, using her eyes to appeal for help. The latter understood her unspoken plea and casually reached over to pat Mei Xing on the shoulder without speaking a word. The communication between men did not require words. Such was the case for this particular moment.

With a faint smile, Mei Xing picked up his suit jacket and left without looking

back.

The door latched shut with a click, leaving the two of them alone with one another.

Shi Yi glanced at him. “You two have quite a mutual understanding.”

“I have known him since I was five or six,” Zhousheng Chen chuckled. “He has always been this way. Every time he sees a pretty girl, he likes to talk a bit more. You don’t need to mind him.”

A pretty girl?

Shi Yi seemed to find this description rather strange. In principle, she should not merely be “a pretty girl” but also his wife, even though their relationship right now still remained in a stage more akin to boyfriend-girlfriend.

Zhousheng Chen walked into the bedroom, pulled out some clean clothes, and, out of habit, undid several buttons of his shirt. Shortly, though, as if he suddenly remembered something, he hastily buttoned-up two of those buttons again and strode into the bathroom. When the sound of running water echoed out from within, Shi Yi finally remembered that tonight, he would be sleeping in the same room as her, on the same bed.

She did not know what she should do, so she sat down on the couch in the living room.

If they were going to sleep together, then... they should be...

She quietly exhaled a breath.

Before long, he had stepped out of the bathroom again. His clothing was neat and proper, giving the impression he was about to go out. “Wait a short while before you go to wash up. I will ask someone to clean up inside first.” As he said this, he had already walked into the bedroom.

“It’s alright...” Shi Yi stood up, intending on going to get some clean clothes for herself, and saw that he had grabbed a black jacket and was slipping it on while he walked out from the room. Finding this odd, she asked, “You’re heading out?”

“Mm.” Zhousheng Chen told her, “There are a few matters at the laboratory

that require a long conference call.”

He spoke very quickly and then, with a natural motion, he glanced at his watch.

“Will you still come back tonight?”

“Yes, just that it will be very late.” He let out a little laugh. “I had some tea just now, so I should not feel tired.”

After briefly informing her of his plans, he left the hotel.

To say she was not disappointed would have been a lie, but she also felt relieved. Although she had somewhat mentally prepared herself, she still felt that there was something lacking between the two of them. In the “pleasures between a fish and water” [\[5\]](#)[acts of intimacy], the foremost requirement was that there was a comfortable, harmonious relationship, like that of fish and water, between the two before the “pleasure” could naturally happen, right?

She had travelled such a great distance today and also strolled through the better part of Bremen with him, so after a hot shower, her feeling of exhaustion became apparent. As she sat on the bed in her pajamas, she could tell that these bed linens were not the ones the hotel provided to the general public as they were especially soft.

Very shortly after laying down on the bed, she fell asleep.

Because subconsciously she was waiting for him, her sleep was light. Upon hearing a noise in the room, she quickly awakened, but her head still felt rather groggy. She opened her eyes and saw that the sky was already starting to show a hazy light. Zhousheng Chen was leaning against the couch and was planning to lay down there to catch up on some sleep. The room was dim, and she could not see his face.

“What time is it?” Shi Yi suddenly spoke up.

He paused, and he raised his watch to take a glance. “5:47.”

“Come up on the bed and sleep for a little bit.....” she invited in a low voice. “It’s tiring to the body to sleep on the couch.”

Zhousheng Chen paused again. He set his suit jacket on the couch, walked over to the other side of the bed, and lay down next to her. The bed was very

spacious. She could sense he was lying there very stiffly, and she could not hold back a little smile. She rolled over quickly, covered him with the blanket, and then took advantage of the chance to put her hand on his waist. Possibly because her mind was still dazed with fatigue, she was behaving more freely than usual. In a slight teasing tone, she said to him, “Zhousheng Chen, is sleeping on the same bed as your wife really that difficult for you?”

“No, I simply did not want to wake you just now.” His voice was also rather low.

“I’m already awake now.”

He chuckled, “You’re not going to sleep anymore?”

“I still am,” Shi Yi answered honestly. “Because you weren’t back yet, I didn’t sleep very well. Now my head feels all dizzy and heavy, and I still want to sleep.”

“Then sleep.” He stretched out an arm and pulled her into his embrace. “I don’t have a meeting until this afternoon. I can sleep here with you a little longer.”

She laid her cheek against his chest, separated by only the thin fabric of his shirt as she listened to him describe his conclusion from his logical train of thought, but her mind strayed to a different thought. This was her first time sleeping in his embrace, and even though he was wearing his button-up shirt and pants, she was in pajamas...

They lay there like this in silence for a while. She could feel her heart was starting to beat unsteadily and could not help shifting her body slightly.

“Can’t fall asleep?” Zhousheng Chen detected her movements and looked down at her. “Or just used to sleeping alone?”

.....

She decided to change the subject.

“Today... your friend praised me many times. You still haven’t said anything.”

Her voice carried a touch of disappointment.

Zhousheng Chen was slightly puzzled but then quickly understood. “I am not very good at praising people, but you are always able to bring me pleasant

surprises. So many, in fact, that at times, I do not know what I should say.”

Her lips turned up slightly in a smile, and she prodded softly, “Then what are you going to do for me in return?”

“Do in return?” He thought for a moment. “Why don’t you tell me, what do you have in mind?”

“You are in charge of putting me back to sleep.”

“Sure.” He did not mind. “Normally, what do you do to help yourself fall asleep?”

“Listen to music... Or listen to poetry. I’ll be listening, and then after a while, I’ll gradually fall asleep.”

Zhousheng Chen was silent for some time.

She closed her eyes, waiting for him to give her a nice surprise.

“Let’s do poetry, then. I will recite slowly some that are tea-related.”

With an “mm,” Shi Yi added, “May I request some that I want to hear? You don’t have to recite the entire poem, just a line or two will be good enough.”

“Yes.” This was Zhousheng Chen’s first discovery of a more difficult side to Shi Yi, but he also found it very adorable.

“Bai Juyi[\[6\]](#)?”

“He wrote more than two thousand poems, and more than sixty of those are tea-related...”

Shi Yi cut him off amusedly, “Whatever you feel like reciting will be fine.”

So serious. If he wasn’t paying attention, even by just a little, he would slip back into that role of the strict, precise-thinking scientist..... Seriously...

Zhousheng Chen did not continue thinking too much into it and chose one at will to respond to her request.

“Clean is the white porcelain bowl, blazing is the red charcoal of the tea brazier.

Fragrant tea is beneath the foam, rising like floating flowers in the fish-eye boil[\[7\]](#).

Beautiful in color when poured into its vessel, its fragrant aroma still lingering after being swallowed.[8]



风炉. Tea brazier, sometimes called tea stove. Originated in Tang dynasty as a heat source for the boiled tea method, with three legs, two “ears” (rings on the side) ([Image credit](#))

Shi Yi did not speak, so he chose another three or four poems.

“Mm...” She seemed pleased and continued, “Su Shi[\[9\]](#).”

“Live [flowing] water also requires live fire to boil. From the fishing rock I draw from the clear, deep river.

The large ladle gathers the moon’s reflection into the vessel, the small ladle dividing some of the river into the bottle.

The milky white foam rolls with the tea leaves within. Then suddenly it makes the rustle sound, like wind, of pouring.

So difficult for the uninspired mind to refrain at only three bowls. Seated, listening to the lonesome city’s long and short beats of the night watches...[\[10\]](#)”

In the beginning, she would state some names for him, but afterwards when she grew tired, he would select some at will and recite them to her.

From Li Bai[\[11\]](#) to Liu Yuxi[\[12\]](#) and then to some other poets who were not very famous. It was not a difficult chore for him to recite as he called the poems up from his memory. This was the first time he discovered that his excellent

memory could be used to do something so amusing.

Shi Yi comfortably listened, not speaking anymore.

She knew that he did not understand the significance of this to her. Even though the poems were different, she had once been coaxed to sleep in the same way before. Accompanied by the sound of Zhousheng Chen's voice, which he had deliberately slowed and lowered, her consciousness gradually became fuzzy. His eyes were closed as he continued to recite for her, his speech becoming slower and slower until at last it stopped.

Inside the room, it was quiet.

Because of their closeness, he seemed to be able to hear the sound of her steady breathing.

Zhousheng Chen opened his eyes and patiently observed her for a while. Once he had confirmed that she was indeed deep in slumber, he closed his eyes again and allowed himself to truly drift off to sleep.

[1] During the Tang Dynasty, 陆羽 Lu Yu wrote his monumental book, 茶经 "Cha Jing" [The Classic of Tea], which became the first definitive work in the world written on tea. It documented in a literary language everything from the history of tea to picking/preparing tea leaves to the tea ware and utensils to how to properly "boil" and drink the tea.

[2] 煮茶 "zhu cha." Literally means "to cook/boil tea." To distinguish it from the "boiled tea" method, mentioned later, I will call this "cooked tea" method. (Let me preface this by saying, I am by no means learned in tea, and please forgive any errors there may be. Just wanted to provide some background to all of you so you're not scratching your heads on what's going on.) Prior to the Tang dynasty, tea drinking, although popular, could be considered less refined, and tea was drank as a way of quenching thirst, in large quantities, and sometimes, for medicinal purposes. In the earliest form of the cooked tea method, fresh tea leaves were placed into water and boiled and then drank, almost like a vegetable broth. Only in the time of the Tang dynasty did tea start to be dried first. During the Tang dynasty, cooking tea would also add additional ingredients such as salt, scallions (green onion), ginger, mint, orange peel etc., boiled at a rolling boil for

quite some time, all the while skimming the scum off the top and ladling up the boiling tea and then immediately returning the tea back into the boiling pot. The ingredients of this type of tea would be eaten as well. This is what Mei Xing and Shi Yi are referring to by “cooking tea.”

[3] Tea leaves that are compressed into a brick or cake-like form. (Also called tea bricks.)

[4] 煎茶 “jian cha.” The “boiled tea” method, which flourished in the Tang dynasty. According to Lu Yu, the author of The Classic of Tea, tea made by the “cooked tea” way with ingredients such as ginger, scallions, etc was like waste water. In The Classic of Tea, it describes very clearly the steps of properly boiling tea. The tea cake is toasted over an open flame, then wrapped in paper and cooled. After it is completely cooled, the tea is ground until it is about as fine as rice grain. The ground tea is added to water and boiled, being careful not to overboil, and when ready, it is then poured out into a tea bowl. Everything is prescribed very specifically in The Classic of Tea, from what fuel should be used for the fire to what size of bubbles should be maintained in the water as it boils to how to pour it into a tea bowl, etc, etc.

[5] 鱼水之欢 “yu shui zhi huan.” Literally, “the pleasures between a fish and water.” Originally, this idiom was used simply to describe a type of relationship between two things or people which was as harmonious as fish and water – natural and comfortable. Later, in literature, it started to be used as a metaphor for the pleasure of sexual intimacy between a man and a woman, and now, this idiom is basically used to refer to sexual intercourse.

[6] 白居易. Bai Juyi was a government official of the Tang dynasty and also a renowned poet. His poetry covered a wide variety of topics and took many different forms, but his style is known for its simple and easy to understand language.

[7] 鱼眼沸 “yu yan fei.” Lu Yi stated in his Classic of Tea that the water should be kept at “second boil” where at the edge of the pot, there is a continuous string of bubbles that are the size of fish eyes. Smaller than this, it is under-boiled and greater than this, like a rolling boil, would be overboiled.

[8] From Bai Juyi’s 睡后茶兴忆杨同州 “A Tea After a Sleep, Suddenly

Remembering Yang Tongzhou.”

[9] 苏轼 Su Shi. An important figure during the Song dynasty. He was a rare, all-round talented man in literature and arts and is also recognized as one of the most outstanding persons in these things in Chinese history. He was a writer, poet, calligrapher, painter, *etc.* You may have heard him referred to as 苏东坡 Su Dongpo/Su Dongpo/Su Tungpo.

[10] This is Su Shi’s entire poem, 汲江煎茶 “Ji Jiang Jian Cha” [Draw from the River to Boil Tea].

[11] 李白 Li Bai is sometimes heralded as the greatest Chinese poet of all time. He was born in the Tang dynasty and is known as the “Immortal Poet.”

[12] 刘禹锡 Liu Yuxi was a Tang dynasty poet, philosopher, and writer of essays.



Additional Comments:

Just like the scene of Shi Yi painting, I am captured by this picture of her, preparing tea as an art form while her mind is filled with images of her past life. Zhousheng Chen and Mei Xing are obviously entranced by her in that moment as well, and I can just imagine the peaceful silence as they watched her carry out this art.

This chapter is filled with details of tea culture and poetry. Hopefully, the huge number of footnotes didn’t scare you off. They’re more for your information so you can understand the art form that tea can be, and realize how captivating Shi Yi would have been in that moment. This chapter “feels” so ancient. All those details create such a wonderful, tranquil feeling. (Don’t you want to be cuddled like that, in that type of atmosphere?)

Plus, I love how Shi Yi teased Zhousheng Chen. LOL.

28 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 9.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 9.2

[June 27, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [63 Comments](#)



(Anyone follow the Bundesliga? Almonda?)

After this chapter, can anyone say anymore that Zhousheng Chen is not attracted to Shi Yi? Did our reserved scientist surprise you? This is an interesting chapter with tidbits of information being dropped. I'll take any speculations and predictions or "I knew it!" from you guys, just to hear what you're all thinking.

Chapter 9.2 – How Can Love be Unraveled? (2)

He slept for approximately two hours and then woke up naturally at seven thirty.

Shi Yi was still fast asleep, and from Zhousheng Chen's angle, he could see the curving outline of the side profile of her face. He followed it to her neck and could even see her fine, smooth skin within the neckline of her pajamas. He

gazed at her like this for some time, an indescribable feeling in his heart. Shi Yi shifted gently, and her hand that had been clutching his shirt collar, for just a moment, loosened a little before quickly tightening its grip again.

He pushed himself up slightly and softly called her, “Shi Yi?”

It was uncertain whether she was answering from within her dream or that she was simply dazed and half-awake still, but she gave a “hmm.”

He deliberated for a little while, but in the end, he chose to lower his head and begin to kiss the exposed skin at her neckline. The stubble that had appeared overnight lightly rubbed against her neck. Shi Yi unconsciously retreated from it, so he let his kisses trail down her collarbone. He undid two of her pajama buttons, allowing some of the lovely and exquisite sight within to show.

“Zhousheng Chen?” She awoke, her voice groggy.

“Mm.”

Their bodies were pressed together, fitting tightly against one another.

She could feel the change in his body, and there was also the suggestive atmosphere from being in a half-awake and dreamlike state. Her throat was somewhat dry, and as her face and ears burned red, she could not help wiggling her body away to avoid the contact between her thigh and his lower body. “Do you want to take a shower first?”

“No, it’s alright,” he replied in a low voice. “I just want to hold you in my arms.”

His actions were not quite consistent with his words, however.

Shi Yi did not say anything more. She could feel his lips were truly simply kissing her, brushing against her neck, collarbone, and chest, neither advancing with his actions nor retreating. Under that thin quilt, the two of them were intimate with one another, and it could even be said, it was almost a form of torture.

“Have you ever read ‘Rhapsody of the Imperial Park’?” he asked.

Shi Yi answered with a faint “mm-hmm.”

She had never once mentioned “Rhapsody of the Imperial Park” to him and did not expect that he would be the one to first bring it up.

“The first time I saw you, I thought of the line in ‘Rhapsody of the Imperial Park’ that describes a woman.” Zhousheng Chen discovered that letting go of her would be even harder than he had expected, so he forced himself to speak softly to interrupt his body’s desire for her. “*Truly extraordinary, matchless in this world. Beguiling and bewitching, elegant and refined.*[\[1\]](#)’ The description in these words is very appropriate to you.”

This was the first time he had ever spoken about their initial meeting.

And it was also the first time he had said something to her that was like the sweet, romantic words between lovers.

With her eyes closed, a smile spread across her face.

She stretched out her hand, trying to touch his face. Zhousheng Chen obliged, halting his words and allowing her fingers to caress his browbone, eyes, and the length of his nose. Shi Yi’s motions were very gentle, and there was even a sense that they contained feelings he did not quite understand.

“Even the best outward appearances will one day be faced with aging and deterioration of that former beauty. In my heart, you are the best.” In a gentle voice, she said, “Beautiful bones. Rare in this world. Those with bone do not have skin. Those with skin do not have bone. Most people’s eyes are shallow, seeing only the skin-deep appearance and not the bones. I can feel your beautiful bones.”

Those subtle rises and drops of the bridge of his nose and his browbone had not changed in the slightest.

The schedule for this conference held by the Committee of Space Research was very full, and although there was an entire week, the two of them did not have much time spent together. Shi Yi was one who could entertain herself, and after she had analyzed and was clear on his very detailed schedule, she voluntarily left him alone and simply strolled casually around Bremen.

It happened to be Bundesliga[\[2\]](#) season, and she was even rather interested in going to watch a live game of football.

She had never had a boyfriend before, but Hong Xiaoyu was a hardcore

German football fan and had instilled in her all sorts of football knowledge so that, as she sat there in the stadium stands, she was even able to recognize some of the more well-known defenders, strikers, and midfielders.

When she told Hong Xiaoyu that she was at the football stadium, Hong Xiaoyu immediately phoned her, insisting that she wanted to experience the atmosphere as well.

Fortunately, the seat beside Shi Yi was empty so she at least did not disturb anyone.

“Shi Yi, Shi Yi, next time bring me along, kay?” Inside the phone, Hong Xiaoyu cried with a sobbing tone, “You’ve found yourself a rich boy and now you’ve dumped me. I’ll pay for my own plane ticket. You only need to provide room and board, ah~”

“Okay, okay, next time I’ll pay for your food and accommodations,” Shi Yi agreed amusedly. She thought for a moment and added, “But next time, I may not necessarily be going to Germany.”

Hong Xiaoyu gibbered away and continued her complaints.

As Shi Yi listened to her, she felt for her bottle of spring water beside her and was surprised when someone picked it up first and handed it to her.

She lifted her head. She had not expected that she would encounter Zhou Wenchuan.

“What a coincidence,” she marveled.

“Not really a coincidence.” Zhou Wenchuan sat down beside her. “I’ve been in Bremen for a week already. I’ve been wanting to meet up with you.”

Shi Yi was a little perplexed but did not pursue the matter. She took her bottle of water back from him. “You’re in Bremen, too? Your older brother never mentioned it to me.”

“He never told you?”

“Mm-hmm.”

Zhou Wenchuan smiled. “Maybe he was worried you might misunderstand.”

“Misunderstand?”

“Misunderstand things between him and my wife.” Zhou Wenchuan did not seem to care to hide anything. “You may not know that my wife, Tong Jiaren had once been engaged to him. It was when they were both still very young. It was also for this reason that my wife basically followed in his footsteps when she was studying, always attending the schools he was at or had studied at. In other words, you can say they grew up together.”

In those prior few times she had met Tong Jiaren, she had already sensed the particular care she seemed to pay Zhousheng Chen, but she had not expected that it would reach back so far and deep. Most of his time in the first half of his life was spent with Tong Jiaren?

Zhou Wenchuan carried on, “Later, for some particular reasons, their engagement was cancelled, and then after that, for some other reasons, I married her.” Zhou Wenchuan seemed, too, to feel that he was speaking very vaguely and shook his head with a self-mocking smile. “There are many complicated stories behind this. If you have the chance, I think you can ask my older brother.”

She nodded. She could guess that those things that Zhou Wenchuan had chosen to keep secret and not talk about, without a doubt, involved many gray area matters.

She was unsure whether she was ready to hear Zhousheng Chen tell her about the Zhou family’s background, so she did not pursue this further.

“So, you came here because your wife is here?” She thought back to that phrase, “worried you might misunderstand,” that he had used at the very beginning.

“She is just like my older brother and has chosen to devote herself to science.” Zhou Wenchuan gave a slight shrug. “I don’t really understand what it is they do. It was a coincidence that they were both invited to come this time around.”

Zhou Wenchuan said a few more things, most of it just casual conversation.

Shi Yi chatted along with him as she pretended to watch the game, all the while still pondering what the purpose of this deliberate encounter with her was.

Perhaps by woman's intuition, she could sense that the feelings Zhou Wenchuan held for Zhousheng Chen were not as deep as his sister's. Whether it was because of Tong Jiaren or some other reason, she knew that she could not completely trust this person.

After the game, the two of them left the stadium.

A vehicle had arrived to pick up Zhou Wenchuan. She could tell that the attendants that waited upon him as well as his driver were, like Zhousheng Chen's attendants, those who were dedicated to serving for all their family's generations. They were all refined, polite, and proper, and every time they opened their mouths to address them, they used "Miss Shi Yi" or "Second Young Master."

In a low voice, Zhou Wenchuan asked whether Tong Jiaren had already returned to the hotel. After a middle-aged man dressed in a black suit nodded in answer, he then turned to Shi Yi and inquired, "Did my older brother arrange for a car to pick you up? Do you need me to drive you back to your hotel?"

Shaking her head, she declined politely and made up a reason, "No thanks. I've arranged to meet up with a friend."

Zhou Wenchuan raised his eyebrow slightly. He seemed to know that this was merely an excuse, but he did not expose her.

From one of the attendants beside him, he took an ordinary-looking envelope and handed it to Shi Yi. "This item here, I believe, should belong to you. Marriages in the Zhou family have always been arranged by the elders of one's parents' generation. Love is greater than any other benefit that could be gained. From the standpoint of my family, I greatly value my marriage and hope that Miss Shi Yi, you will choose, like me, to remain silent. At the same time, however, this matter must be resolved."

Taking it from him, she watched as he got into his vehicle and left, and then she felt through that sealed envelope.

She could feel that, inside the entire envelope, there was only a very small object, and from its shape, it should be a ring.

She did not open it up immediately.

After returning to the hotel, she first washed her heads and poured herself a glass of warm water before she opened that envelope and pulled out from inside it the ring that was identical to Zhousheng Chen's wedding band. It was a very simple ring, without any unnecessary adornments or even designs. She examined it carefully and very quickly, on the inside of the band, saw the engraved words, "The ninth day of the fourth month of the year of Xin-mao[3]."

Even though she did not often translate dates back into the Lunar calendar, she still would not forget that this particular date was May 11th of this year.

This was the ring he had lost. There was no mistaking it.

Shi Yi slid the ring onto her own finger. Her fingers were slender, and therefore, his ring on her finger was, of course, very large. As she gently twirled the ring around her finger for a little while, the trace of jealousy she had felt earlier disappeared. While she still somewhat cared that he and Tong Jiaren had grown up together since childhood, she was certain that he did not know about this.

No one would be so foolish that he would gift someone else with his wedding ring that had his wedding anniversary engraved on it.

Furthermore, that person was Zhousheng Chen, and with his intelligence...

While she was lightly exhaling a breath, the door was pushed open from the outside, and Zhousheng Chen stepped into the room before closing the door behind him.

Shi Yi raised her head to glance at him, and as she did so, for some reason, she suddenly thought of the intimacy they had shared this morning. She quickly pulled her gaze away. "I ran into your younger brother today."

Zhousheng Chen placed his jacket on the couch. "He came looking for you?"

"Mm-hmm. And watched half a game of football with me."

He was about to sit down when he saw the ring on her finger and was taken aback briefly. In an instant, though, he was able to deduce the specifics of the

entire situation. “He gave that to you?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“And did he also tell you the nature of the relationship between Tong Jiaren and I?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“How clear was he about it?” In an upfront manner, he sat down and asked, “Do you need me to add or clarify anything?”

Seeing him so composed and calm, she was actually somewhat puzzled. “You aren’t worried that I’ll get mad?”

Zhousheng Chen smiled, “Your intelligence is quite acceptable, and you should have the capability to reason.”

With a “pfft,” she burst out in laughter. “Thank you for the compliment.”

“She and I have known each other since we were children, and we have studied at the same schools all throughout the years. Even now, we will occasionally have work exchanges and collaborations.” Zhousheng Chen seemed to be a little thirsty. He glanced at her glass that Shi Yi had set on the table, and with a very natural action, he reached over, picked it up, and took a drink from it. “Later, her sister married my [paternal] uncle[\[4\]](#), and she and I cancelled our engagement. Later still, for reasons that I am not sure of myself, she and Wenchuan were married.”

A concise clarification that very directly explained the questions.

She thought to herself, they had grown up together and had been engaged all that time, but then, because of such a bizarre situation, they had broken off their betrothal. He must still have a place in Tong Jiaren’s heart. Plus, Zhou Wenchuan had also said that she and Zhousheng Chen had similar aspirations and interests and were the same type of people.

Spinning the ring around her finger, her thoughts seemed to drift haphazardly as she pondered.

When her gaze finally wandered back, she discovered that he was staring at her with a thoughtful expression.

[1] 绝殊离俗，妖冶嫋都. This time, I did quote directly from [this](#) translation of Rhapsody of the Imperial Park. Stanza VI, verses 407-408.

[2] German professional football (soccer) league

[3] 辛卯年，四月初九. “四月初九” means the “ninth day of the fourth month”, and in this case, it is referring to the Lunar calendar, not the Gregorian. 辛卯年 or “the year of Xin-mao” is referencing a very traditional way of naming years using a 60 year cycle called the sexagenary cycle or the stem-branch cycle. *i.e.* There are 60 names, Xin-mao being one of them, for 60 different years, and after the cycle is complete, the naming of years starts from the very beginning of the cycle again. I will not dive into details except to say this 60 year cycle has been adopted since at least the time of a text called 春秋 *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which was composed in approximately 5th century BCE and used this system to record dates. Since then, over these thousands of years, this counting and naming of years has remained unbroken, even to this day. Anyways, the date engraved into the ring translates to May 11, 2011 in the Gregorian Calendar, Shi Yi and Zhousheng Chen’s anniversary.

[4] 叔父 “shu fu”. While in English, “uncle” is correct, the description of “shu fu” clearly is referring to Zhousheng Heng (*i.e.* Xiao Ren’s father).

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

29 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Additional Comments:

Which of you ladies was disappointed that Zhousheng Chen did not express more of his gratitude at Shi Yi’s declaration of unconditional trust? Does this satisfy your imagination yet?

We all know that Shi Yi pursued this relationship because of the intensity of her feelings from her past life. I do like, here, that it shows Shi Yi is not foolish and does not allow emotion to cloud her judgement. While she once again demonstrates her trust in Zhousheng Chen, she also displays, as he put it, “her capability to reason.” Definitely not a dummy or damsel-in-distress type of female lead.

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 9.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 9.3

[July 1, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [33 Comments](#)

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With this update, we have now caught up to the radio drama for *Beautiful Bones*. For anyone who can understand Mandarin, have a listen. (Here is [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).) The CV for Zhousheng Chen is one of my absolute favourites and is Peanut's CV love. Yeah, I know Zhousheng Chen's voice is supposed to be ordinary as well, but I'm willing to forgo that piece to listen to Xuan Zone's dreamy voice as Zhousheng Chen.

By the way, loved reading the discussions, thoughts, and predictions from all of you for the last chapter. I translate because I want to discuss my favourite novels. This Bremen trip keeps getting more and more interesting... and eventful.

Chapter 9.3 – How Can Love be Unraveled? (3)

“I need to leave to go back tomorrow,” he said. “The flight is tomorrow morning.”

She set the ring down on the table. “I should go back, too.”

Zhousheng Chen had already told her before that he would only be staying one week in Bremen this time, and it was only the exact date and flight of his departure that she had not known. Therefore, when she heard him say this, she was not surprised, only somewhat sad to have to part from him.

Shi Yi had never once tried to hide her attachment to him.

He could see it as well. "The conference has ended already. Shortly from now, I need to step out to take care of some personal matters but will be back around dinnertime."

"How about we go together?" she asked. "I won't disturb you when you are doing your things."

She was simply trying to, as much as possible, spend more time with him, even if it was sitting in the car waiting for him.

He considered her suggestion for a moment. "Alright. Tell Uncle Lin what books you would like to read, and I will have him prepare some for you in the car."

She thought this was a good idea. Reaching for a sheet of notepaper on the desk, she scribbled down several titles with a pencil. They were all books that she had wanted to read but had not been able to buy. Her penmanship was very beautiful and could even be said that it was bold and had its own unique style. Zhousheng Chen picked up the paper and, seeming rather surprised, he carefully studied it for some time. "Your calligraphy should be held in no less regard than Uncle Chen's." He was referring to that uncle who had inscribed the poem on her painting that time she had painted before everyone.

She gave a smile, not denying this.

After all, she had learned from him of the past, and there was pride in this.

He called for Uncle Lin and then handed him the notepaper, instructing him to ready these books for Shi Yi to read that afternoon. After Uncle Lin had left the room, Zhousheng Chen looked at her with a serious expression. "Shi Yi, my great apologies. Although we are already married, I do not even know your handwriting. After this matter has completely concluded, I will set aside a long period of time to allow us to learn more about and understand one another."

This person always seemed to be so serious over the most unexpected things.

She smiled, then glanced at the redundant ring that was on the table.

Zhousheng Chen followed her gaze with his eyes. Pulling out his wallet from the inner pocket of his jacket, he placed the ring inside it. "This sort of situation will not occur again."

The two of them rested briefly and then left the hotel.

Sure enough, the books she liked had been readied and placed inside the vehicle. When Zhousheng Chen arrived at his intended destination, before stepping out of the car, he inquired her opinion on whether she wanted to stay in the vehicle to wait for him or go up with him and find a place she could rest. Leaning her side up against the seat, she thought for a moment and asked, "Will you be gone for long?"

"No." Zhousheng Chen removed his jacket and placed it beside her hand. "At most half an hour."

He was keenly sensitive to time, and if he said it would be half an hour, then he would absolutely not exceed that.

"I'll wait for you in the car, then." She wagged the book that was in her hand. "I can have half an hour of reading. Otherwise, if I go up with you, it will all be people I don't know..... I actually really don't like meeting strangers."

"I noticed." He chuckled and leaned over toward her to whisper, "You will blush."

Her eyes widened. "Really?"

"Really."

He was smiling as he stepped out of the car and left her with Uncle Lin.

However, after Zhousheng Chen had departed, Uncle Lin also got out of the driver's seat and stood beside the vehicle near its front.

This particular highrise building's parking garage was on the third level and provided a wide field of view. Her eyes swept around. She surmised that Uncle

Lin had taken into consideration who she was and her status and hence did not stay in the same vehicle with her. She lowered her head and continued to browse through this book, “Strange Tales in Unofficial History,” of stories that had been passed down for hundreds and thousands of years. The author’s writing was quite good. The tragic parts would touch the heart while the parts about passions and fervor would cause an upsurge in emotions.

Words and sentences unfolded before her, and as they did, decades and decades passed by.

Until his name appeared.

It was simple white paper with typeset words and little more than a dozen lines of text. She however, fixed her eyes on them for a full seven or eight minutes, not daring to read any further.

Her heart pounded against her chest with a heavy, nervous thumping that could be heard in her ears.

It was not that she had never searched for information on those memories that seemed as if they had come from a half-dreamlike, half-awake state, but most of what she had found only mentioned him in passing with a few sentences. As a traitor of his country, no one would choose to write books or essays about him. His life of magnificence and accomplishments had not left any presence in the several thousand years of recorded history.

She leaned back against the seat. After a long time, she finally, word by word, phrase by phrase, finished reading this section of unofficial history.

Writers and historians from later generations were, for the most part, more ruthless with their pen.

The author described him as a self-seeking, fawning official who had held control of an army at a young age and whose power was second to none in the imperial court. The words were firm and written like absolutes, as if what he had written were the true historical facts. Shi Yi was silent for a moment. Then, she tore out that page, ripped it up into tiny pieces, and placed them into her pant pocket.

She had lost her desire to read.

As she set the book down beside her hand, she noticed the jacket he had taken off before he left the car. Her hand unconsciously stretched out and stroked it, her finger following the curve of the sleeve's edge to gently draw out a circle. This simple action already caused her cheeks to burn, as if she had touched his wrist.

He once "never forsook the world," but in the end, everything had been buried in time.

And now, what he desired to do today would perhaps, several hundred or several thousand years later, not even have a record of it.

His aspirations, his compassion, his every action and deed — how many people truly understood these?

Her mind felt rather jumbled, and she forced herself to close her eyes to rest and allow herself to calm down.

In that moment when her eyelids closed and darkness descended with them, the piercing sound of gunshots suddenly rang out in violent succession. Shi Yi's eyes flew open and she stared disbelievingly out the window where she saw four people, who had not bothered at all to conceal their faces. Their arms were stretched forward and firing. Their target was not in her direction, but the loud crack of gunfire had shattered windows and the accompanying noise echoing through the body of the car was entirely real.

"Miss Shi Yi." Behind her, Uncle Lin had already swiftly yanked open the car door. "Do not move. Remain within the car."

She was unable to react. Four vehicles had already screeched to a halt in front of the car she was in, blocking her view.

The people who stepped out one after another all stood there silently, forming a protective shield in front of Shi Yi's vehicle. The firing gunshots and running and screaming people in the distance all seemed disassociated from where she was.

Gunfire still sounded, but she no longer could see the scene.

Her hands were shaking uncontrollably, and she forcefully clutched his jacket that was beside her.

She was completely incapable of thinking. She could only remember Uncle Lin's words: do not move.

Soon, the gunshots died out.

The people and the cars protecting her, however, still did not move. She did not dare even to blink. Even though she could not see anything, she still stared fixedly in that direction where she witnessed that scene. She told herself slowly, *Shi Yi, you need to stay calm, stay calm...*

All of a sudden, the car door was pulled open.

She immediately clutched his jacket to her chest, staring in terror at the door.

"Shi Yi."

Zhousheng Chen was calling her.

She wanted to answer. Her mouth opened, but no sound came out.

"Shi Yi." He called her again in a soft voice as he sat into the car. "It's nothing. It's nothing at all. Don't be scared. There is absolutely no danger at all." This was the first time he had ever lost all form of order or logical flow when speaking, and he just chose things to say that would most comfort her. Sentence after sentence, he told her that she was not in any danger.

In a deliberately gentle voice, he consoled her.

Zhousheng Chen covered her hand with his own as he took his jacket from her. Then, he clasped both of her hands in his palms. "Say something to me, Shi Yi. Say my name."

"Zhousheng Chen..." She listened to him and finally said her first words.

"Keep saying my name."

"Zhousheng Chen..."

"Keep saying it."

“Zhousheng Chen.”

His voice guided her and helped her forget that gun battle that had arisen so abruptly.

Through their dialogue, those stabbing, cruel sounds of bullets being fired gradually faded away from her mind. There was a thin layer of sweat covering Zhousheng Chen’s palms. They were warm and strong as they gripped her hands tightly, perhaps even a little too forcefully.

But it was the ache in her hand because he was squeezing her with such strength that caused Shi Yi to slowly recover and calm.

“Any better?” he asked her in a low voice.

“Mm.” She forced a smile. “I’m sorry, I’ve really never come across...”

This included her past life where she had also never truly seen battles of cold, unfeeling weapons or corpses.

“It’s alright. Your reaction is very normal.” With his right hand, he tucked the long strands of her hair behind her ear. When his fingers brushed against her cheek, he could feel perspiration on it. “There isn’t anyone who is not afraid of gunfights.”

Besides movies and television dramas, this was the first time she had ever encountered such a situation.

But yet, he was very calm.

Shi Yi could tell that there was no fear in him. What he felt was more worry for her.

A gun battle in one of the busy and affluent districts of the city swiftly brought the police, and vehicle after vehicle drove into the parking garage in a continuous stream. Zhousheng Chen was unwilling to let her stay here any longer, and before the police had sealed off the parking garage, their group quickly received special permission and left the scene. Sitting there in the car, Shi Yi could not stop her eyes from searching for the location where the gunfight had taken place.

The broken glass from car windows was scattered on the ground.

Passersby, who looked to be Westerners, were following police instructions and were waiting to answer questions.

The departure of their vehicles was unexpected and therefore attracted the attention of some people, including those police officers, who threw strange glances in their direction. She knew they could not see her through the car window, but she still avoided their gazes. From the corner of her eye, she could see Zhousheng Chen looking at her. She turned to face him, smiled, and assured him softly, "I'm a lot better. Don't worry."

Zhousheng Chen stretched out his hand and stroked her hair. "Go back and have a good sleep."

Shi Yi agreed to his suggestion.

She suddenly grew very frightened. If she or he had been struck by a stray bullet just now and could not be saved, would they have been separated once again? This mood hovered over her and would not dissipate.

Zhousheng Chen seemed to have some apprehensions as well and did not go out with her to eat, instead, instructing people to set out the food in their room.

The silver chopsticks she was holding in her hand were rather cool to touch. She was feeling unsettled. Zhousheng Chen could tell that she did not have much of an appetite and he did not try to persuade her to eat. Very soon, he sent for people to remove the food and prepare some tea and cakes for her instead.

After the food had been taken away, Uncle Lin stepped into the room, seeming as if he had something to say. Shi Yi very tactfully withdrew into the bedroom to change into some casual clothing. As she took off her jacket, however, some tiny bits of paper fell off from it.

It was from the page of the book she had ripped up this afternoon.

There had been no place for her to throw away the scraps of paper, so she had simply stuffed them into her pants pocket. Now, as she reached inside it, her hand was indeed covered by bits of paper. Shi Yi was afraid he would see them,

so she brought her pants into the bathroom, pulled the pocket inside out, shook all the little pieces into the toilet, and flushed them away.

When she walked out of the bathroom again, Zhousheng Chen had already come into the bedroom.

“Why are you holding your pants?” he asked with slight puzzlement.

“Nothing. I was worried you might walk in so I changed in the bathroom.”

An amused expression could faintly be seen as he repeated, “Worried I might walk in?”

His voice carried a hint of teasing.

Shi Yi detected it, but she did not respond with jesting. She set her pants down on the couch. As she turned away, Zhousheng Chen had already walked up very close to her. “Are you still thinking about what just happened?”

“Mm.”

“It was just an accident.” He explained briefly, “That building is a large Chinese marketplace. The shops inside have been regularly using two different logistics and transport companies. In this case, the two companies had gotten into a disagreement. You know that logistics and transport is an industry that can reap exorbitant profits. All over the world, the disputes amongst these companies are very serious, and many have used violence to settle the matters. We just happened to run into one of those situations.”

She nodded, accepting his explanation.

And then, they were both quiet.

He was so close, within reach of her hand, but she could lose him so easily as well.

Whether it was his identity and background or the incident earlier that had made her realize how fragile life was, these all left her feeling very unpeaceful.

Zhousheng Chen could sense her emotions and wanted to say something, but she had already gently taken his hand that had been hanging by his side into her own while her other hand clutched the edge of his shirt. Very quickly, she moved her face close to him and kissed him.

Her eyes were tightly shut. She felt his arm wrap around her waist as he returned her kiss.

No matter how many times of intimacy they had had, each time when they were close like this, her heartbeat would become rapid and her breathing would grow heavy.

After a long time, she finally let go of his hand and reached up, trying to undo his shirt buttons.

Zhousheng Chen could sense her movements, and he asked softly, “What do you want to do?”

“Zhousheng Chen.” She, too, spoke in a quiet voice. “I’m really pretty, right? Out of the people you know, would I be considered really pretty?..... Maybe there are other people more beautiful than me, but...”

“There aren’t. There is no woman more beautiful than you.” He gave a faint laugh. “Before, when I would study history, the one thing I most did not believe in was ‘the beauty trap[1].’ However, after meeting you, I believe it.”

The meaning of his words was subtle and indirect, but his analogy was very exaggerated.

She knew that she was attractive, but it was not to such an extreme. But to be praised in this way by the man she loved most, even an average-looking woman would be filled with joy. “The eyes of the lover beholds Xi Shi[2].” [“A lover views the one he loves as the most beautiful.”] The reason why this saying resounded with people’s hearts and minds was because the key point was not that you were being compared with Xi Shi but that the one who thought you were the most beautiful was your “lover.”

Shi Yi lightly exhaled a breath. “So, I’m not an unworthy match for you, right?”

“No.” In a low voice, he told her, “You satisfy all the vain and prideful desires of a man.”

She pressed her lips together, trying to conceal her smile.

She continued to unbutton his shirt.

Zhousheng Chen did not ask her again, nor did he stop her. Amid her

somewhat nervous motions, he simply lowered his head and kissed her.

He remembered, in history, the “the beauty trap” was a scheme used to bring down empires, but there had still been people who had willingly offered up the ruin of their country or their city for the beautiful maiden.

[1] 美人计 “mei ren ji.” Literally, this means “trap of the beautiful maiden.” This is a true war strategy found in the Thirty-Six Strategems. To bring down the enemy, send a beautiful maiden to (usually) the ruler or a senior leader of the enemy side so he becomes so enthralled by her he neglects his duties.

[2] 情人眼里出西施 “qing ren yan li chu Xi Shi.” Xi Shi is one of the Four Beauties of ancient China. This saying is often translated to the common English saying, “beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.” When looking at the person you love, in your eyes, she is as beautiful as Xi Shi.

Additional Comments:

There is so much about Zhousheng Chen that is attractive, but for me, the thing about him that touches me most is his sincerity and effort in learning to love Shi Yi. We’ve seen it sprinkled throughout the novel to date, this scene (and one other one later on) truly demonstrates to me how much he has taken this to heart. “Shi Yi, my great apologies. Although we are already married, I do not even know your handwriting. After this matter has completely concluded, I will set aside a long period of time to allow us to learn more about and understand one another.” I truly sense his sincerity in that to him, not knowing something as minute as her handwriting indicates that he has not done an adequate job yet. And he intends to rectify that situation.

What do you think Shi Yi felt as she read through this unofficial account of Xiao Nanchen Prince’s life? It pains me to think that someone whose heart belonged to the good of the people was written off in history as a traitor. But I feel even more for Shi Yi, who knows the truth but has to read these “facts.” Shi Yi has never shown extreme emotion, but pain and anger must have struck her in that

moment for her to rip up that page.

Shi Yi is so unsettled after seeing the gun battle. Understandably so, as we would all be, but her feelings are not stemming from simply the shock. Fear, but not for her own life. Fear of loss, fear of separation once again, fear that she would never get the chance to say the things she wanted to say to him in this life. Faced with mortality, the fragility of life as she said. And hence, her out of character behaviour at the end... What do you think Zhousheng Chen was thinking?

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

30 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 10.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 10.1

[July 4, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [33 Comments](#)



Shi Yi and Zhousheng Chen are separated for a little while, but don't worry because his phone calls will be nice and regular.

Chapter 10.1 – Like Your First Adornment (1)

Shi Yi made a last minute change to depart on a flight that night. Zhousheng Chen went to the airport with her.

After sending away the people accompanying him, they stood there at the entrance to the security checkpoint, both of them especially quiet.

“This reminds me of the first time I saw you.” Shi Yi glanced over to the other side of the security entrance. “You were carrying your computer and ID and nothing else, but you were still asked to go back to be re-screened.”

“First time,” he said. “That was the first time I had ever been requested to go back and screened through security again.”

It was the first time? She remembered the very first time he had looked over at her.

It was because she had been staring too blatantly at him.

He raised his wrist and glanced at the time.

She knew it was nearly time for her to leave. Hooking her pointer finger around his hand, she gently held on and said, “I’m going now.”

She did not want to part from him, but nevertheless, she still needed to be sensible and leave.

Zhousheng Chen gave an “mm,” looked at her, then suddenly asked, “Are you thirsty?”

“A little bit.” She licked her lips. They were a little dry.

Earlier, on the drive here, she had been too preoccupied with talking to him and had forgotten to drink water.

She wanted to tell him it was not an issue, that she could buy something after she had passed through security. But before she could open her mouth, Zhousheng Chen had already made a gesture for her to wait a moment, and then he turned around, bought a bottle of water for her, twisted open the cap, and handed it to her.

Somewhat surprised by this, Shi Yi took a couple of sips, but then felt she was being wasteful. “I can actually just go in and buy one. It’s such a waste to just take a couple drinks now and then not be able to bring it in with me.”

“It’s alright. I will take it and drink it along the way.”

Their final conversation turned out to be about not wasting a bottle of mineral

water.

Later, when Shi Yi was boarding the plane and thought about this dialogue again, she still found it humorous.

The nighttime flight was very quiet.

Before long, she grew sleepy. Her thoughts gradually drifted to that intimate moment that had ended soon after it had barely begun. She remembered how he had helped her put on her clothes and asked her why she was suddenly so troubled. With his intelligence, he had easily perceived her abnormal behavior, that she wanted to hurriedly solidfy their relationship and was filled with anxiousness and panic out of fear that there would be some unforeseen misfortune.

She had not answered his question.

If she had said, “I’m afraid I will never see you again,” it would have seemed too soppy and melodramatic.

Or perhaps he would have found the situation unbelievably strange.

She remained in her own thoughts for a while until she heard two people near her discussing the gun battle that had occurred during the day. The content of their conversation was similar to Zhousheng Chen’s explanation. However, the situation described by the mouths of the Europeans provided another perspective, which essentially described that building as a Chinese marketplace that was frequently reported by neighbouring people to have “Chinese triads” present, like the “Fujian Clan” or something similar. Their depictions were so fantastical it was as if Chinese people were the most unstable presence in the city...

These people describing the situation had not confirmed the validity of their words but yet were speaking as if it was all true.

Surrounded by whispered English conversations, she thought of Zhousheng Chen and his friend, Mei Xing. After being raised under the influence of a family culture that stretched back several hundred years, both pairs of dark black eyes did not show even the slightest flicker in any situation. Mei Xing, though, was more similar to the people of during the Six Dynasties period^[1] in history in that

he chose to follow his own heart and will. But when Shi Yi thought about Zhousheng Chen, her heart instantly softened.

She was not able to use a word, a sentence, or a single trait of an era to describe him.

As soon as her vacation was over, she immediately stepped back into the mode of working under high pressure.

Mei Lin had set the final rounds of the contest to take place in Wuzhen's [\[2\]](#) newly rebuilt and developed West Village [\[3\]](#), and it was also a collaborative event with this new scenic area. When compared with the old East Village, everything in this newly built area seemed brand new, but already, indications of commercialization could be seen.



Wuzhen: scenic, ancient water town. ([Image credit](#))

Fortunately, the area had not officially been opened to the public yet.

As a staff member of the organizer, she was able to enter the area earlier. When Hong Xiaoyu heard about this, she took advantage of it and insisted on coming along with her to stay for leisure. This type of ancient water town of Jiangnan was very beautiful at night, and to be there without all the tourists and visitors was an opportunity you could only chance upon.

On the phone, Hong Xiaoyu made a vague mention about her new boyfriend.

Shi Yi did not think too much about it and simply asked Mei Lin to reserve an extra room for them.

The two came rather late, arriving there in the evening.

Shi Yi stood waiting for them at the entrance to the new scenic area. Off in the distance, she saw Hong Xiaoyu carrying a camera and walking beside a man, all the while talking and laughing. The man looked to be upright and honest, his features emitting a gallant feel about him.

Shi Yi's eyes made a quick sweep over his face. Hong Xiaoyu had already noticed her and jogged over. "You know, it's so hard to even get a chance to see you . We both live in Shanghai, but these last couple months, your whereabouts have been so irregular. Now, finally, we actually end up meeting in a place just outside of Shanghai. Gee, no offense, beautiful Shi Yi, but the extent that you put your man above your friends can definitely go down in history books."

"You can wait two or three days, then. I'll be back in Shanghai after that." She could not be bothered with Hong Xiaoyu's mocking and whispered to her, "Don't think I don't know. You just want to have some 'real' development in your relationship with him, and you're using me as an excuse to come here."

Hong Xiaoyu threw her a quick glare and then gave brief introductions between the two of them.

That person's occupation was similar to Hong Xiaoyu's except one was a journalist while the other was a news photographer.

But Shi Yi had a persistent sense that there was a sharp fierceness within this person that he could not completely conceal.

Her intuition had always been very accurate, and as the three of them chatted and walked into the scenic area, she inevitably eyed him over several times. However, when she heard Hong Xiaoyu mention later that he was a war correspondent, her mind was finally set at ease.

She remembered his name. It was Du Feng.

Several people from her company had arrived, and all of them possessed extremely beautiful voices.

Hong Xiaoyu would normally not have the opportunity to meet these people.

This time, because of her connection to Shi Yi, she finally got to see them all. Everyone was very easygoing, and when Shi Yi made the introductions, she was also very casual. Most of the time, she would say something along the lines of, “This is the narrator in XX documentary,” or “This is the male/female lead of such and such hit drama”...

Over and over again, an expression of sudden realization would show up on Hong Xiaoyu’s face.

But Du Feng would only smile from time to time. Mostly, he simply laughed at Hong Xiaoyu for making such a fuss.

“Most of these water towns have stories in them.” Mei Lin pinched a snail shell in one hand and grinned as she looked at D. Wang. “I remember last time you told me that story about Xitang[\[4\]](#), the one where frequently, someone who is staying there will disappear for several hours and then when they come back...”

Wang shook his head and cut her off. “Shi Yi gets scared easily. Don’t talk about stuff like that at night.”

He said this very naturally.

However, a lot of people there knew about the relationship between him and Shi Yi. Some of them had smiles that carried hinted meanings while others were already starting to tease them. This type of good-natured joking was common and harmless.

To avoid him feeling awkward, Shi Yi only smiled and did not really reject his kindness.

Hong Xiaoyu had never seen D. Wang before, and she was now intrigued. In a low voice, she asked Shi Yi, “How does he know you’re scared easily?”

Shi Yi whispered back, “I often have to record late into the night. Every time, I have to wait for someone to come with me before I dare take the elevator to go downstairs. The people who have worked with me for a long time all know. It’s pretty normal.”

“Nope, not normal.” Hong Xiaoyu’s eyes narrowed. “Extremely not normal.”

Shi Yi pinched the back of her hand lightly. “Don’t be nosy.”

“This is the last thing I’ll say.” Hong Xiaoyu asked her curiously, “If your hubby finds out someone likes you, will he get jealous?”

Would he get jealous?

Shi Yi did not have any confidence when it came to the answer to this question.

She thought, Zhousheng Chen definitely did like her, but how much? In her heart, she really was not sure.

And that was why she was feeling anxious, right? Just like in Bremen.

“Don’t tell me you don’t even have this little bit of confidence in yourself.” Hong Xiaoyu frowned. “I’ve watched you from how you started to like him, how you guys started your relationship, and even how you unexplainably got married without any sort of ceremony. You’re too set on him. You’re clearly a priceless treasure, but it’s like you’re selling yourself off as one of those pearls you can buy at a street stand...”

Shi Yi could not hold back a laugh. “What kind of analogy is that?”

“But that’s what it is...”

“Shh.” Shi Yi picked up her mobile phone and told her quietly, “I need to go out and take a phone call.”

She got up and stepped away.

This was an old-style wooden building, and their dinner location was on the second floor, overlooking the river, with seven or eight tables arranged in the room. Their group occupied two of the tables near the east side, and so she walked over to a window on the west side.

Zhousheng Chen’s phone call to her came punctually.

She leaned against the wooden window and talked to him in a soft voice.

She had trained Zhousheng Chen so that he could now very adeptly, starting with what he had eaten for dinner, report his day’s events to her, regardless of how small or big the matter may have been. He truly had a good memory, for he

could even tell her the approximate time of every happening. At the end, when Shi Yi was in a very good mood from listening to his account, she thought of what Hong Xiaoyu had asked her. Putting on a nonchalant tone, she said, "Lately, there seems... there's someone trying to pursue me."

Zhousheng Chen was silent for a short moment. "Is it that D. Wang?"

"Mm... How did you know?"

"I have always known."

.....

Shi Yi suddenly remembered that he had all the details and information on her. Immediately, she felt that awkwardness of being found out.

For a moment, she did not speak.

Zhousheng Chen, though, perceived the reason behind her words. "You would like to know whether I mind?"

Shi Yi was too embarrassed to admit this, but she did not deny it either.

Zhousheng Chen gave a chuckle. "You can think of it this way: it is because I mind that I have been keeping track of your activities at all times."

"Really?"

"Really." He paused, and then added softly, "The honest truth."

She giggled out loud. Far off on the waterway, she could see several moored wooden barges with lanterns hanging from them.



There were no tourists within this area yet, only the organizers, media, and finalists for the contest, and hence these canal barges did not work during the evenings, staying docked and becoming part of the scenery themselves.

Zhousheng Chen said a few more things to her before they ended their phone conversation.

After everyone had finished dinner, there were some activities that had been organized by the person in charge of this scenic area.

They had the choice of either taking a cruise on the canals or going to the theatre to listen to *pingtan* [narrative singing and storytelling][\[5\]](#).

Shi Yi did not enjoy the feeling of being near a river late at night, so she chose to listen to *pingtan*. Half of the seats of the theatre were occupied. The muggy wind of summer blew in. She listened without really paying attention as she gently twirled the prayer beads on her wrist.

On such a hot night, this setting could not be considered pleasant.

Somehow, though, they caused her to remember things that had grown hazy in her mind long ago.

In that life, since a young age, she had studied the history of the Tang dynasty, and she had been greatly interested in the “Song of the Rainbow Skirt and

Feathered Robes[6]” composed by Emperor Xuanzong. Unfortunately, it had been lost as a result of the An Lushan Rebellion[7], and no one had ever found the musical score again. Finally, one day, it was heard that the last ruler of the Southern Tang state, Li Yu and his queen, Zhou E’Huang[8] had managed to restore a greater part of it.

She really wanted to hear it, and Zhousheng Chen had also indulged her, instructing to have the musical score borrowed.

However, that day, she committed a wrong and missed that performance of “Song of the Rainbow Skirt and Feathered Robes.” All of this was simply because of a single cup of tea. She had loved tea from a young age, and so, Zhousheng Chen had sought out and collected for her all sorts of famous, high-quality teas. That day, she had wanted to steep his favourite tea for him, but because of the quality of water, she had poured out one cup after another.

Famous teas were worth thousands in gold, but she was squandering it at will.

That was the first time he had ever reprimanded her. Anger could be seen on his face, but he restrained it.

He simply did not allow her to view the music and dance performance and left her standing in the study with writing brush in hand as she, one word at a time, wrote out the famous teas of past dynasties. When she reached the Tang dynasty, her eyes grew red from feeling misunderstood. She could hear the sound of music off in the distance, but she could only continue to grip the brush and write down each word: *Meng Ding; Zi Sun [Purple Bamboo Shoot]... Divine Spring Water, Small Bundle; Bright Moon in the Jade-Colored Mountain Stream; Budding on Fang Mountain; Tea of Lake Yong Holds Essence; White Dew of West Mountain; Yellow Shoot of Huo Mountain...*

She blinked her eyes furiously, trying to hold back her tears, but they still fell onto the paper and formed damp halos.

“Eleven.” Leaning over slightly, he looked down at the paper that was covered with her writing and finally opened his mouth to speak. “One cup of tea that you pour out is equivalent to several days’, possibly even an entire month’s worth of the common people’s provisions. You are fond of trying teas and so I will buy tea for you, but I do not want you to become proud and willful and not know the

hardships of the commonfolk.”

She gripped the writing brush and gave a slight nod of her head.

“You are the future crown princess...” Zhousheng Chen continued.

Her head, though, suddenly whipped up, and she looked at him, eyes glistening with tears.

She did not want to it to be because she was the crown princess that she had to remember these things. She was simply his disciple, and therefore, she willingly accepted the punishment he gave her.

Stubbornness completely filled those tearful eyes.

Zhousheng Chen was about to speak but in the end, did not say anything. Unable to hold back a faint smile, he straightened himself and told her, “Carry on with your writing.”

A night breeze blew in.

The *pingtan* was still going on. Shi Yi leaned herself on one side of the wooden bench, still unable to pull her thoughts back to the present.

Before her eyes, there seemed to be a xuan paper covered completely in lines of writing.

And out of the corner of her eyes, she saw only him.

[1] 魏晋 “Wei Jin.” Short for 魏晋南北朝 “Wei Jin Northern and Southern Dynasties,” also known as the “Six Dynasties.” This was a period spanning from 220-589 AD that had six separate dynasties (Three Kingdoms, the Jin dynasty, and the Northern and Southern dynasties).

[2] 乌镇. Wuzhen is a famous, ancient water town located approximately 130 km from Shanghai. It is characterized by its canals, bridges, and restored historic architecture.

[3] 乌镇西栅 “Wuzhen Xi Zha.” The Xi Zha, or West Village scenic zone within Wuzhen.

[4]西塘 “Xitang.” Similar to Wuzhen, this is also an ancient, scenic water town located in the province of Zhejiang.

[5]评弹 “ping tan.” This is a narrative musical art form that originated in the Jiangnan area. Its purpose is to tell a story through the combination of both singing and talking. The performer(s) will play an instrument while singing/talking in the Wu dialect (see footnote [1] in chapter 2.3).

[6]《霓裳羽衣曲》”Ni Shang Yu Yi Qu.” The “Song/Dance of the Rainbow Skirt and Feathered Robes.” Legend has it that Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty had a dream of maidens on the moon performing a dance to music, and when he awoke, he wrote down the song and named it after the garments he saw the maidens wearing in his dream. His favoured concubine, Imperial Consort Yang (the famous Yang Guifei) was said to have choreographed the dance set to it and performed it before him.

[7]安史之乱. A major uprising that nearly brought down the Tang dynasty. General An Lushan was a favourite official of Emperor Xuanzong. He had significant power and control of the army and was even said to have been adopted by the emperor’s favourite concubine, Imperial Consort Yang (Yang Guifei). The rebellion began when An Lushan turned his army to take the (Tang) city of Luoyang and shortly after, proclaimed himself emperor of the new Yan dynasty. The rebellion spanned more than seven years and over the reign of three different emperors before it was finally put down but the death toll was huge and it had significantly weakened the Tang empire.

[8]李煜 Li Yu was the final ruler of the Southern Tang state. His rule was approximately 200 years after the An Lushan rebellion. He was an incompetent ruler but is also known in history books as a master of poetry. His love for his musically gifted queen, Zhou E’Huang was well-known.

Additional Comments:

Just in case it is not clear, the intimate scene at the very end of the last post really was just buttons being undone and maybe a little bit more. It had “ended

soon after it had barely begun,” so no, they did not consummate their marriage. We have seen that certainly Zhousheng Chen has a physical attraction to Shi Yi, but do you think that, given his care for Shi Yi and attentiveness to her needs, he would actually let their “first time” be immediately after such a frightening situation had occurred, and when Shi Yi was not in a proper state of mind? Being the gentleman that he is, I suspect that he would consider doing so as “taking advantage” of Shi Yi in that moment. He did not refuse her actions for they were her way of finding comfort, but he did not allow it to progress further either. He’s a bit anal (remember the timely gifts he would send when they first were together?), and I reckon he would ensure that their “first time” is properly romantic.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
31 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 10.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 10.2

[July 8, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [21 Comments](#)



Shi Yi gets a visit from an unexpected person. Anyone able to guess who? I'm very fond of that person...

Chapter 10.2 – Like Your First Adornment (2)

The décor of their accommodations for the night could not be considered beautiful and fine.

It was more similar to the homes of ordinary folk.

She was not certain whether it was because of the *pingtan* she had listened to after dinner or because of the atmosphere of this place but she suddenly was reminded of their time together, before he had left, in Zhenjiang. It had been brief but also mysterious. At the time, she had only been anxious about trying to get along with his strange family, but now that she recalled that period, she increasingly wanted to sigh.

His existence in such a family, was it destined?

A wealthy, powerful family hidden from the rest of the world.

She slept until some time past three o'clock in the morning, when that image of transcribing down tea names repeatedly began appearing in her mind. After tossing about in bed, she arose. She deliberated for a long time until, finally, she dialed his number, but listening to what seemed like an endless dial tone, she several times considered hanging up the call.

Was he resting? Or still in the laboratory? Or in a meeting?

Raising her mobile phone up in front of her eyes, she stared at the screen that indicated that the call had not yet connected, and her thumb was already sliding over to select the option to hang up. Suddenly, the call was connected... Shi Yi immediately brought the phone to her ear.

"It's so late. Why are you still awake?" Zhousheng Chen's voice was somewhat puzzled.

"I had a dream." She still sounded sleepy. "It was the same dream, over and over again. I knew I was dreaming, but I couldn't wake up and could only watch it happen."

"A nightmare?"

"Mm-hmm. Nightmare."

"Those water towns all have their own tales." She was not certain where Zhousheng Chen was. There was a slight echo accompanying his voice coming through the receiver. "I have heard some of them. Most contain some mentions of being haunted or bewitched, but I do not really believe those. Perhaps you did not get enough rest during the day?"

"Mm-hmm. Perhaps."

The dreams had all been the same. They were all about him and her, and Shi Yi did not find them frightening. As a result, when she awoke, she only had an urge to hear his voice, as if she needed to confirm that he truly did exist, that he was in the same time and space as she was.

"What did you dream about?" he asked.

"I dreamt that I was copying out the famous teas of each of the dynasties," she

answered in soft voice. “Can you recite them out? I mean, teas from the Tang dynasty?”

“Almost. I do know some.”

“For example?”

“For example?” He gave a chuckle. “You would like me to recite tea names to coax you off to sleep?”

“Mm-hmm.” She had originally been lying on her back, but now she turned to the side and changed to a more comfortable position. “I want to hear.”

“My wife should be one of the Top Four Female Voices, right?” he teased her. “I am just someone who does research, and there really is nothing special about my voice. I am afraid you will start to dislike it after listening to it for a while.”

“I won’t,” she laughed. “Never in this life will I dislike it.”

On the other end of the phone call, he grew silent for a moment. And then, he called her name.

“Mm?”

Shi Yi thought he wanted to say something.

Unexpectedly, though, he really began reciting the tea names to her. Meng Deng; Zi Sun; Divine Spring Water, Small Bundle; Bright Moon in the Jade-Colored Mountain Stream; Budding on Fang Mountain; Tea of Lake Yong Holds Essence; White Dew of West Mountain; Yellow Shoot of Huo Mountain...

For some of the names, individual words were slightly different than what she knew, perhaps as a result of how they had been recorded down, but she did not speak up to correct him.

She sat up and leaned against the wooden headboard, looking out the window at the sparse lights. The architecture and design of this place carried an ancient feel. In that life, the Cui family of Qinghe and Chang’an were both north of the Yangtze River. What did Jiangnan look like then? She did not have much of an impression, and had only learned from the poetry of Li Bai^[1] and Du Fu^[2] that Jiangnan’s “maidens were as snow^[3].”

And several hundred years later, she was sitting here, listening to Zhousheng Chen recite to her from the other side of the ocean some rather pointless tea names.

There was nothing special about his voice that was worth mentioning.

He was reciting very slowly, but he was very patient. She discovered that the best trait of Zhousheng Chen was his patience. She did not know whether he was like this with everyone, but at least from when they first met to the present, he had always been like this with her.

“Tea from East White Mountain of Wuzhou; Keemun Square Tea Cake; Thin Tea Cake of Qu River; Yellow Bundle of Qimen; Striated Tea of Ya Mountain; ‘Pillars of Heaven’ Tea; Little River Bundle; Tea of Jiukang; Fire-Riding Tea; Dogwood Window...” He paused for a moment. “That is about it. It is just these ones. Would you like to listen to another dynasty?”

“Mm.” Shi Yi hesitated, wanting to ask him if he was too busy.

All of a sudden, a very faint sound could be heard outside of her room door.

It sounded like something metallic falling to the floor. She had heard this sound earlier before as well, but she had been too eager to hear him speak and had ignored it. “Shi Yi?” Zhousheng Chen suddenly called her again. “Is there something the matter?”

“I think I heard a weird sound...” she whispered, and then she comforted herself, “It wouldn’t be what you said, that ‘this place has its own tales’, right? ...”

He chuckled, and in a slight teasing tone, he reminded her, “You are a Buddhist, and you do not do bad things. Why should you be scared of gods, demons, and ghosts?”

“I don’t know. It’s my nature, maybe?”

She thought over this point carefully. Indeed, someone who had passed through reincarnation should not be fearful of the dark or terrified by gods, demons, and ghosts.

Zhousheng Chen said a few more words.

Very seldom was Shi Yi the one who initiated a phone call, and he, too, unexpectedly began chatting with her on his own accord about his research work. As Shi Yi attentively listened to him, she walked over and closed the windows until they were tight. When she went over to check the door, she heard some footsteps.

She fixed her attention upon the sound, trying to hear it more clearly.

“Are you still afraid?” Zhousheng Chen seemed as if he was by her side and could see the shifts in her mood.

“A little bit...” In a lowered voice, she explained, “I think maybe someone really likes this water town setting. I just heard some footsteps.”

“Sometimes, the more frightened a person is of something, the more the person wants to get close to that thing.” Zhousheng Chen’s voice carried a reassuring strength, and there was a deliberate gentleness in it to comfort her. “Do not open your door. Go back on your bed and try to sleep. If you cannot fall asleep, I will keep you company and talk to you.”

She was truly a little frightened, so obediently, she climbed back into bed. “Am I holding up your work?”

He gave a laugh. “No.”

Zhousheng Chen talked with her for a long time until gradually, the sounds disappeared. Shi Yi slept until past nine o’clock, when she was awakened by Hong Xiaoyu to go to breakfast together. When she asked Hong Xiaoyu whether she had heard any strange noises the previous night, Hong Xiaoyu replied with surprise that she had not and also turned to look at Du Feng, who was beside her, asking him if he had heard anything.

Du Feng merely picked up some food with his chopsticks and shook his head.

Seeing their responses, Shi Yi felt even more fearful after the fact, and before the afternoon’s final rounds, she quietly told Mei Lin that she wanted to change rooms. Gnawing on her pen cap, Mei Lin laughed gleefully, “Even if I change it

for you, you're still going to be scared. How about these next two days, you come stay in the same room as me?" Shi Yi, of course, gladly accepted the offer.

Mei Lin asked her why she had not called her when she was up in the middle of the night from fear of ghosts. Shi Yi thought about that telephone call that had accompanied her the whole time until the sky had started to brighten with the light of dawn, and a veiled little smile touched her lips. Her head was slightly lowered, and even Mei Lin, who was the same gender as her, was unable to take her eyes off of her because of this smile. She murmured to herself, "I'm willing to bet that you can make a man have the urge to give up everything[4] for you."

Shi Yi reached over and gave her a nudge, signaling to her that the competition was beginning.

The two of them then sat up in a proper manner and watched the performance of the finalists.

Zhousheng Chen's call promptly arrived at noon, and he asked her what her arrangements were for the night. Hearing that she was going to be staying in the same room as Mei Lin, he felt reassured. Some time past three o'clock, when the competition's program had been completed for the day, she suddenly received a phone call -- a very unexpected phone call.

It was Zhousheng Ren.

She recalled, the way this adopted brother of Zhousheng Chen had treated her could be considered very friendly and he had been even more affectionate to her than Zhousheng Chen's actual brother by blood, Zhou Wenchuan. The boy had told her on the phone that he happened to be free these next several days and wanted to spend some time with her, his future sister-in-law. Although Shi Yi found this rather peculiar, she did not turn down his request.

In regards to this form of address where he called her "future sister-in-law," she had mentally prepared herself very early on.

So long as Zhousheng Chen's mother did not recognize this marriage, even Uncle Lin, who was always by Zhousheng Chen's side, would have to continue addressing her as "Miss Shi Yi." Perhaps this was one of the rules in that large

family clan. She and Zhousheng Chen clearly lived in present day society and were legally recognized as husband and wife, but within that family, it was not acknowledged.

Regarding this, when Shi Yi thought about it, she would sometimes feel aggrieved.

However, she would only indulge briefly in this mood and then she would let it die out. To her, there was nothing more important than Zhousheng Chen. From the moment he asked her to marry him, she had set herself on being with him for the rest of this life.

The status and recognition by others were not important.

Zhousheng Ren arrived around dinnertime. Apart from two young girls, the people accompanying him were all men. Unlike the time they had met in Zhenjiang, this time he was out on personal business, and he was much more casual, wearing simply a pair of light blue jeans and a white, short-sleeved t-shirt. He looked like an ordinary boy who had just graduated from middle school.

Shi Yi was beside a little stone bridge that was relatively close to the entrance of this scenic area and was standing in a shady area as she waited for him.

She had not expected that he would be striding in in such a conspicuous manner. Walking right up to Shi Yi, the corner of his lips turned upward in a smile as he addressed her as “Big Sister Shi Yi.”

“You walked straight in?” She found this somewhat unusual.

After all, this scenic area was not open to the public yet and was only allowing in those, like her, who were part of this contest as well as the media.

Zhousheng Ren nodded. “Mother had worried that there might be some problems, so she purposely arranged for people to prepare the way for me.”

He said this with all seriousness and seemed rather like a shadow of Zhousheng Chen.

Shi Yi laughed, “When you talk to me like that, it makes me think I’m looking at your big brother.” Reaching out one of her hands, she gently touched the boy’s

forehead. "You're sweating? Are you really hot?"

The boy was growing fast. He was nearly as tall as her.

Perhaps because none of girls of the same generation in the family would dare do that to him, he seemed to be dazed for a short moment, but very quickly, he smiled and nodded.

She had seen Xiao Ren a few times prior and knew that he did not enjoy speaking, so she did not say much either.

Sure enough, the Zhou family had made preparations. The person managing this scenic area had beforehand readied the place that Xiao Ren and his entourage would be staying in. When Shi Yi went with him to his loft suite, the two girls had already speedily organized everything and had even changed out the entire tea set.

Xiao Ren seemed to not have a habit of drinking tea. After the two young girls had left the room, he pulled out two cans of cola from the small refrigerator within the room, opened them up, and poured Shi Yi one glass. "I heard the people of the Mei family mention that Big Sister Shi Yi is very skilled at making tea?"

Shi Yi took the glass from him. "I'm not bad at it, I guess. It's just a little hobby of mine."

"Big sister, you seem like... someone who was born to marry into our family."

"You think so?" Shi Yi laughed.

"You think not?" Xiao Ren lay on his back on the wicker chair and examined Shi Yi with a serious expression.

She knew Xiao Ren was referring to her abilities in the traditional arts of qin, chess, calligraphy and painting as well as her love for classical literature. "Maybe it's because I have a preference for classical literature..."

Shaking his head, Xiao Ren interrupted her, "It's not simply that. I heard about what happened to you guys in Germany... Big Sister, were you scared? If you see gun fights, bleeding, people dying, and... many other extremely ruthless things, would you be scared?"

The boy's voice was very clear and resonant, yet he was asking such questions. For a moment, Shi Yi could not respond. As she thought again about what had happened in Germany, her heart still quivered in fear. "Yes, I would."

Zhousheng Ren held the drink glass in his hand, continuing to observe her. His eyes possessed a calm that a fourteen-year-old teenager should not have. After some time, his lips pressed together and turned upward in a smile, and he comforted Shi Yi, "Those things I just said were only to scare you, Big Sister."

[1] 李 [李白] "Li Bai." Li Bai is sometimes heralded as the greatest Chinese poet of all time. He was born in the Tang dynasty and is known as the "Immortal Poet."

[2] 杜 [杜甫] "Du Fu." A well-known poet of the Tang dynasty and also a friend of Li Bai. He is also known as one of the greatest Chinese poets.

[3] Referring to the pale skin tone of the maidens, which was viewed as a beautiful trait.

[4] 倾国倾城 "qing guo qing cheng." Yet another note on this idiom. My faithful readers should be very familiar with this idiom, which usually describes such beauty that it brings the downfall/ruin of a country or a city. More literally, Mei Lin has said, Shi Yi's beauty is so great that she is willing to bet someone would even have the urge to "bring the ruin of his country and city" for her. I tie this back to the very end of chapter 9.3, when Zhousheng Chen said that prior to meeting Shi Yi Shi Yi, he had not believed that "the beauty trap" could work. After knowing her, though he understood that someone could fall for a woman so much that he was willing to give up everything, to even bring about the ruin of his country and city, for that woman.

There was an interesting discussion going on in the comments a few posts back. Does Shi Yi truly love present day Zhousheng Chen or is she merely transferring her love for Xiao Nanchen prince over to him? The request for him to recite the tea names for her reminded me of the discussion. If you guys read through comments, you might have read my terribly long reply on that topic, but I'd like to leave some of my thoughts down here as well (you can read more of it in the comments in chapter 9.1).

Xiao Nanchen Prince provided for Eleven the familial love that she rarely had, a sense of warmth and comfort. However, while I'm sure those feelings played into her love for him, I am also convinced that the greatest reason she loved him was because of the man she knew him to be, the man who placed the greater good of the people above everything else — the beautiful bones that were widely sung about during his time.

Shi Yi's initial attraction to present day Zhousheng Chen is strictly because he is the reincarnation of the man she had once loved. Did she love this Zhousheng Chen? She loved the him that he reminded her of, but probably not the man in the airport or the scientist in his lab coat or even the man behind the voice on the telephone asking her to be his fiancée. But as she got to know him, she realized that the core of who this man is, his character, morals and values — his beautiful bones — has not changed. Just as those beautiful bones were a part of Xiao Nanchen Prince, so are they a part of Zhousheng Chen in this life. She is not transferring her love. He is not a substitute, someone similar doing things that reminds her of the man she loved. He *is* the man she has always loved, his appearance changed, his personality maybe a little different, his interests also different, but the character, morals, and values — the beautiful bones — never changed.

And so, I do not consider her request to him to recite the tea names as trying to create a shadow of the past, to transfer any feelings. She is asking this man to do what he had once done for her, and although he doesn't remember it, he still is able to give her the *same* feelings, not a shadow, that he had once given her. Those feelings were from a time that may not have been simpler but perhaps, more innocent. Why do we feel like Shi Yi views that past as something so beautiful, that sometimes, you believe she wishes she could just go back there?

A time when she had not learned of or experienced treachery, deceit, separation, loneliness and searching. A time when her heart was still whole and had not been hurt by the cruelties of people and life. Just as someone who married her university sweetheart and is still with him now but still reminisces about and sometimes wishes they could go back to their schooldays romance period, not because she does not treasure the times they have now together but because it was more innocent. To Shi Yi, back then, it was just him and her, and although they were only as teacher and disciple, the feelings she had felt were still deep, beautiful, and pure to her and will forever be something she treasures, especially because they had been taken away so abruptly from her.

Of course, these are merely my thoughts, and I would love to hear other interpretations.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
32 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 10.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 10.3

[July 11, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [51 Comments](#)



As a few of you pointed out already from last update, Zhousheng Ren is no ordinary youth. We learn more about him and the Zhou/Zhousheng family.

Chapter 10.3 – Like Your First Adornment (3)

She was somewhat innately perceptive, especially in regards to people's behaviours and attitudes.

If there was even a slight, subtle hint of something, she could detect it.

And so, she was thinking, Xiao Ren's sudden appearance here to visit this future sister-in-law of his was definitely not simply as he had described, that it was "on his way." Xiao Ren was quite a bit more particular than Zhousheng Chen about his food and lodgings, perhaps because he was the only son of Zhousheng Chen's uncle and, even though he had been given over in adoption to Zhousheng Chen's mother, he was still very much doted on and pampered.

His very gestures and expressions more or less emitted a sense of self-importance from being spoiled and loved.

However, he truly seemed to be fond of Shi Yi, or at least, she could not sense any sort of unfriendliness.

This little brother had brought with him a trunk of clothing, which was moved into the room Shi Yi and Mei Lin were staying in. The people who had moved the trunk had just stepped out of the room before Mei Lin immediately opened up the unlocked trunk. The entire trunk was filled with clothing. From layering garments that were to be worn next to the skin to outer garments, everything that she could need was all there.

Shi Yi had previously worn clothing made by the Wang family, and she knew they liked to sew two pearls on the inner edge of the sleeves.

Therefore, she only needed to rummage through a little before she knew that these clothes had been made by the people of the Wang family.

While Mei Lin was still looking through the clothing, someone had moved a whole box of water into the room.

“Big Brother mentioned that you heard some strange noises last night,” Xiao Ren explained to her simply, “so, if possible, these next couple of days, we will try to avoid drinking the water or eating the food from this place. The people who came with me will take care of all that for us.”

“That cautious?” Shi Yi could not suppress her laughter.

Xiao Ren also laughed with her, and in a half serious, half joking tone, he answered, “Whether it’s ghosts from hell or ‘ghosts’ among the living, the people of the Zhou family have encountered many of them, so of course we have learned to be more careful.”

Shi Yi merely treated his words as a joke and teased him, “Have you ever encountered any?”

But contrary to expectations, the boy did not reply.

From his facial expressions, she could not perceive anything unusual, but Shi Yi still seemed to feel that she had said something she should not have.

That evening, when she was having her phone call with Zhousheng Chen, she mentioned this incident. Zhousheng Chen paused slightly before telling her, “Xiao Ren’s mother died in an unexpected event, and furthermore, the reason for her death was somewhat unique. Hence, at times, his words and behavior may be a little peculiar.”

Zhousheng Chen’s explanation was very vague.

To be honest, Shi Yi did not understand what he was saying, and in a seldom seen occurrence, she pursued the issue. “What was the reason?”

He did not answer.

Shi Yi thought for a moment and then spoke again. “Sooner or later, I will need to find out about these things.”

“The Zhou family is rather unique. 96% of its assets are held internationally, and it has some business and friendships that are hidden from the light of the law,” he said. “Although the family of Xiao Ren’s mother was a longtime friend of our family, the reason for she chose to marry into the Zhou family was primarily because they wanted to investigate some matters pertaining to the Zhou family. Later... she died by accidental means.”

Shi Yi leaned against the edge of the window, listening as he continued to clarify this event of the past.

Approximately eight or nine years ago, when Zhousheng Ren was still a young child, he had gone onboard a gambling ship with his father and mother. This gambling ship belonged to the Zhou family. At the time, the Zhou family had been taking the lead to coordinate the business transaction of allocating the rights to an ore deposit for which ownership had not yet been claimed. And it was on this ship that, after her intentions had been discovered, Xiao Ren’s mother was given her punishment of death by the family clan.

At the time, in order to not bring about a negative effect on Xiao Ren, the illusion of a “death by accidental means” was created.

But as Xiao Ren gradually grew older, he naturally came to know some of the truths.

And so, on the topic of “ghosts among the living,” he had chosen to remain silent.

Shi Yi was stunned by Zhousheng Chen’s description of his own family, but she chose not to delve much deeper.

When she linked up in her mind all the things of his past, she increasingly felt that the environments in which they each lived were completely different worlds.

“In some aspects, I do not belong to the Zhou family,” Zhousheng Chen stated. “When this whole matter is done, everyone and everything will return to their original trajectory.”

“So, you actually don’t want to inherit the control of the Zhou family?”

“I have absolutely no intention of doing so.”

Near him, someone was saying something in a language she did not understand. It sounded like it was work-related.

Shi Yi did not speak again, and they ended this conversation.

Outside the window, the wind was blowing rather forcefully, creating swirls on the surface of the waterways and whipping up the clothing of passengers inside the fishing barges. The subsequent sounds of laughter and loud voices rang out.

She thought to herself, she understood what he meant.

If it could be said that in both lives, Zhousheng Chen’s belief and desire were to reverse the course of development so that there would be fewer families that would endure misfortune, then hers could be summarized much more simply: she believed in him, and she would always stand by his side.

The next evening was the last round of the competition finals.

Xiao Ren had said that he wanted to watch, and Shi Yi had told him in a completely serious tone that he would not receive special treatment. For instance, he could only come by himself into the competition area and sit in a

corner in the seats reserved for the media. She had thought that this proud boy would not want to comply with those terms, but contrary to her expectations, he still came, alone and even carrying a book. Since Shi Yi was sitting at the judges' table, most of the time, she could not watch or take care of him, and only when the competition was over did she finally have an opportunity to check on him.

She had not expected that a quick glance at the book in his hand would discover teaching material written in a foreign language.

She did not look through the content of the book in detail, but her eyes swept over familiar formulas. It was physics.

"You want to study physics in the future?" Finally, Shi Yi could see in him traces of an ordinary person.

"Mm-hmm." Xiao Ren nodded his head, closed the book, and set it down flat on his lap.

"That's great," she agreed quietly. "With these types of subjects, the further you pursue your studies, the more blurry the boundaries become between the individual fields and disciplines. Maybe one day you can even be better than your big brother."

"It's not possible. I cannot possibly exceed him." Xiao Ren laughed, and, in a seldom seen moment, he was somewhat shy as he explained, "He's a genius. At age twelve, he was receiving invitations from universities. Age fourteen, he entered university. Age nineteen, he received his PhD in chemical engineering. I'm already fourteen, but I still have not entered university."

She had heard these words before, spoken from the mouth of Zhou Wenchuan.

But when Xiao Ren said them, he truly was extremely proud of these facts, and there was even an obvious sense of worship in his tone.

"Oh, is that so?" Shi Yi deliberately pretended that she had just learned this information, and in accordance with the act, she gasped in surprise, "That's amazing."

"He is very amazing." Xiao Ren looked at her. "Otherwise, why would my

second sister-in-law still love him?”

“Second sister-in-law?”

“Tong Jiaren.”

“Oh,” she smiled. “I heard they used to be engaged.”

“Yes.” Xiao Ren did not attempt to conceal this. “Tong Jiaren is also the older sister of my birth mother. Anyway, the relationships are very complicated. At the time, because my birth mother married Fath—... Uncle... she took it upon herself to break off the engagement.”

She had been the one to do it of her own accord?

Shi Yi gave another “oh” in response.

“But this is all just what I heard. I hadn’t been born at the time yet.”

Perhaps because their topic involved Zhousheng Chen, this was actually a rare moment in which Xiao Ren had much to say.

Shi Yi chatted with him for a while and also carefully browsed through his book, but she could not really understand what was written. In some ways, this boy appeared to be very similar to Zhousheng Chen. She pondered, if Xiao Ren had the chance to study under Zhousheng Chen, the arrogance and finickiness that had been produced as a result of his family’s coddling could be completely polished away.

After the two of them had talked for some time, Shi Yi gave Mei Lin an excuse and first took Xiao Ren out for dinner by herself.

This was the last night of the contest finals, and by tomorrow afternoon, everyone would be leaving this place, returning to their own respective cities. It was unavoidable, therefore, that Shi Yi would need to spend some time with the group, drinking tea and carrying out casual dialogue.

Xiao Ren insisted on staying with Shi Yi. He did not say much and would occasionally answer with a word or two when faced with Hong Xiaoyu’s curiosity as she tried to strike up a conversation with him.

Later, when the older voice actors had all retired for the day and only the younger people remained, everyone began discussing what they could do to entertain themselves. Somehow, their topic turned to pai gow [Chinese dominoes][\[1\]](#).

“I didn’t bring anything for that,” Mei Lin laughed as she curbed their enthusiasm. “I’m afraid we won’t have enough time to go out and buy a set now, right?”

“It doesn’t need to be so serious. We can just find something here to use as a substitute.”

Everyone was in high spirits. Shi Yi did not really understand the game, so she simply listened and observed.

Xiao Ren, on the other hand, in a low voice summoned a girl who was standing not far away and quietly gave her a few instructions. The girl, who was one of his accompanying attendants, quickly left, and when she returned, she was holding a long box.

“What is that?” Shi Yi asked inquisitively.

“Pai gow. Also called ‘bone tiles’.”

Shi Yi looked at him in surprise.

Beside them sat Hong Xiaoyu and Du Feng. Hearing their conversation, Xiaoyu’s interest was aroused. “Someone really brought some. Perfect. Open it so everyone can play.”

The young girl simply looked at Xiao Ren, and only after he gave a slight nod of his head did she open up the long, narrow box and place it on the table.

Lustrous, smooth ivory domino tiles that were slightly yellow in color were stacked in towers of four, but very swiftly, they were laid out into eight rows.

The young girl appeared as if she did not intend to leave and in fact, stood there in front of the table with the solemn look of a dealer. A quiet had settled over everyone. Initially, they had all assumed that this little brother of Shi Yi was simply a pampered, spoiled child of an affluent family, and the young girl accompanying him was surely there to wait upon his daily needs and wants.

But seeing the tiles on the table as well as watching the girl's fluid motions a moment ago when she had stacked them... If they had not known better, they would have thought they had stepped into a gambling hall of the olden times, and they were esteemed patrons who had been given their own separate game table.

"My family's elders are fond of this, so to please them, everyone more or less has learned a little bit," Xiao Ren kindly explained to them. "This big sister here often accompanies Father when he plays, so she is very familiar with it."

This explanation was rather curious but not difficult to understand.

Now that there were tiles, those who earlier had eagerly wanted to play turned their attention over in their direction and approached the table to place their bets. Because they were only playing for fun and Mei Lin had strictly prohibited everyone from using real money, the young girl, who had taken on the role as the banker, divided up some gaming chips to every person as their wagers.

Their private room soon grew very lively. Shi Yi, though, was curious and quietly asked Xiao Ren, "Your fath—... your uncle really likes this game?"

"The people in the family all like it." Xiao Ren looked over at Shi Yi. "Big Brother never told you?"

She shook her head.

"Your family is so interesting." Hong Xiaoyu found this boy's words and demeanor very entertaining. "Do you know how to play?"

Zhousheng Ren nodded. "Yes."

Hong Xiaoyu burst out in a laugh. Tugging on Du Feng's arm, she asked him, "Want to give it a try? In a moment?"

"If we're not playing for real money, then I'll play a bit." Du Feng also seemed amused as he looked toward Xiao Ren. "Never thought a little boy would know how to play pai gow. Are you good at it?"

Zhousheng Ren returned his gaze. "I'm not very adept in it, but my skills are more than adequate to play with all of you."

“Oh.” Du Feng laughed amusedly. “That’s some pretty big talk. When I was in Macau[2], I did not lose very often.”

Xiao Ren contemplated for a moment before he spoke. “Do you know of the saying, ‘pai gow that risks a city[3]’?” He seemed to remember someone or something, and a trace of a smile could be heard in his voice. “The life-or-death, win-or-lose instances of pai gow are such that in a single night, you can lose an entire city. And so, do not heedlessly enter into this game, especially when you are acting impulsively and based on feelings.”

[1] 牌九 “pai jiu.” Literally, it means to “make nine.” A Chinese gambling game that uses a set of 32 Chinese dominoes. “Pai jiu” is the Mandarin pinyin for this game, but in English and casinos, they have transliterated it as “pai gow.”

[2] Macau is known as the “Monte Carlo of the Orient,” with an economy that is highly dependent upon gambling tourism.

[3] 倾城牌九 “qing cheng pai jiu.” 倾城 “qing cheng” is what I often translate as “downfall of a city.” However, the word 倾 “qing” can also mean “to throw in”, “to risk” or “to lose” something. The saying, “pai gow that risks/loses a city” is saying that the risks in the game of pai gow are so high, and if your skill is not good enough, you could lose everything, even an entire city, in a single night. Therefore, if you have not fallen into the allure of the game, don’t let yourself, but if you have, you must as soon as possible learn the skills (and cheating skills) that will decrease your risks to the lowest possible and increase your chances of winning to the highest possible.

Additional Comments:

Just a little tidbit: This gambling ship incident had been mentioned earlier, and I had told you before that the first book, 突然想要的地老天荒 (also called 一生一世), of the series describes the event, including the death of Xiao Ren’s mother, in detail. In that very last bit about “pai gow that risks a city”, Xiao Ren is actually quoting the male lead of that first novel, who had said these same

words onboard the gambling ship. The “someone or something” that Xiao Ren is remembering here is likely that male lead and probably the (awesome) scene at the gambling table he had created that time.

P.S. Next update begins chapter 11, and I have an inkling that many of you will like that entire chapter. Don’t miss it.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

33 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 11.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 11.1

[July 15, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [51 Comments](#)



I forgot who asked me about the age difference between Eleven and Xiao Nanchen Prince. I couldn't remember offhand that time and gave an approximation, but the answer is given in this post.

Mo Bao Fei Bao says her inspiration for her novels is her real life. There are parts of her and her experiences written into most of her novels as a way of journaling what she wants to remember. So now that you have read more about Zhousheng Chen and his romance with Shi Yi, I'll give you this tidbit: MBFB has her own real life chemistry professor whom she loves dearly and she once said

that the favourite male lead that she has written is Zhousheng Chen. It's no wonder that Zhousheng Chen is, to me at least, the type of man that every girl would want to have as a husband and spend the rest of her life with. The perfect but down-to-earth romance.

The ancient water towns are so romantic with their bridges and canals. And what could be more romantic than a reunion in one of those towns?

Chapter 11.1 – Your First Adornment was Like You (1)

“Pai gow that risks a city’?” Du Feng smiled, as if he was thinking of something. “That’s a saying you don’t hear often.”

Zhousheng Ren lowered his head and began again to flip through the book he had brought along. “Mr. Du, you seem very interested in all this.” His tone had suddenly turned cool and distant, but Du Feng did not seem bothered by it.

Perhaps it was the feeling of pridefulness that Xiao Ren radiated, or possibly it was something else, but Shi Yi seemed to sense that the atmosphere between him and Du Feng was very unfriendly.

Everyone was playing excitedly, but Shi Yi felt it was rather pointless.

When she saw Xiao Ren’s focused look as he read his book, she suddenly felt guilty. He really loved to read, yet he was keeping her company here and carrying out idle conversation with people. Pulling out a pen from her handbag, she inconspicuously wrote on a facial tissue: *Let’s go back?*

Then, with her pointer finger, she tapped the back of his hand and covered the book he was reading with the tissue.

The boy was taken aback momentarily, but then his lips came together and turned up into a smile.

They quickly departed from that place. Shi Yi returned to her room to grab some books, paper, and a pen, and together they went to a quiet teahouse. Sitting up on the second level next to a window, they each read their own books.

Every once in a while, Shi Yi would raise her head to glance at Xiao Ren. She all

of a sudden had a feeling that she was like a parent or guardian.

And this child was certainly one of those who loved studying, the type where you absolutely did not need to worry about him. From the very beginning, once he had fully immersed himself into his reading, he paid no heed to the sounds of water or the songs of the cicadas around him. With pen in hand, he was continuously writing something on his paper, and his eyes never left his paper and book.

Shi Yi lowered her head and carried on reading the book in her hand.

She also had the habit of writing as she read. At times, when she read a word or sentence that she liked, she would copy it down and that would help her remember it. Maybe the atmosphere here was simply too nice or perhaps Zhousheng Ren's stillness had influenced her. The pen in her hand had been writing away and then it stopped.

Somehow, like her hand was being guided by something, she put her pen to paper and wrote a sentence:

Summer, sixth month, year of Ji-hai^[1], the emperor died in the Palace of Eternal Happiness.

Her pen was still once again, its tip hovering above the paper, reluctant to continue writing.

She clearly remembered it had been the first day of the sixth month because that was the day she was born. She had come into the world, but on that same day, after the late emperor had breathed his last, fourteen-year-old Xiao Nanchen Prince had refused to accept the sealed imperial decree presented to him, questioning the genuineness of the seal for it appeared too small and suspecting that there was a mutiny in the imperial palace. This had nearly led to a disastrous incident of civil disorder.

He had been fourteen years old when she was born into the world.

Even before the first time she had seen him, the things she had heard about him were enough to fill a book.

Shi Yi had written the words of that one line such that they were very small, and her handwriting was very faint as well. Her heart pounded as she stared at it for a while. Perhaps she seemed overly entranced by what she was looking at for she attracted Zhousheng Ren's attention. The boy set down his book and glanced at what she had written. With some surprise, he asked, "What you wrote, is it about the Zhousheng Chen of ancient times?"

She, too, was taken aback and looked over at him in hesitation. "You know about him, too?"

"Yes." Xiao Ren's appreciation of Shi Yi grew even more. "He is in the Zhousheng family genealogy records. Although the historical records do not have much information, I'm very interested in him. He was suspected many times of conspiring against the state and was also very amorous."

"Amorous?" Shi Yi repeated in astonishment.

"He had relations with the crown princess. How could he not be amorous?" Xiao Ren laughed as he said this. "Who's the crown princess? The future mistress of the Eastern Palace[\[2\]](#), but for him, she gave up everything and leapt to her death. Is that not amorous? That is so much more than others around him."

Xiao Ren's tone was half-joking as he said this.

Shi Yi was even more shocked.

"I heard Mother mention, my big brother was specifically named after this person," Xiao Ren laughed, "so I was even more interested in him. Too bad, though, that not much was recorded on him."

Too little was written in the records of him, and furthermore, what was written was not very complimentary.

This was what grieved her most.

The two of them talked for a while before Xiao Ren carried on with reading his own book. Shi Yi, however, could not settle her heart. Her eyes were fixed on that line again, and after wavering for quite some time, she continued writing:

Upon reading the document, the Nanchen Prince refused to weep and only stated, "The imperial seal upon this document is too small. A rebellion is

suspected within the palace.”

She suddenly had a thought. She wanted to write down all those remaining memories she still had in her head.

Regardless of how much she still remembered.

This idea caused her sleep to be restless the entire night. When there was something you especially want to do, you subconsciously thought about it over and over again. It was something that was completely beyond your control. She tossed about the whole night in a half-asleep, half-awake state, and filling her mind were all those things she had once heard about: the flooding of Jiangzhou, the fierce battle of Shuozhou, six campaigns to Daizhou.....

Eventually, even Mei Lin could not tolerate her any longer and, when the morning light was just starting to show, reached over and gave her a weak shove. “I hate you. Tossing and turning all night so that even I couldn’t sleep.”

Shi Yi was exhausted herself as she mumbled, “Kept on having dreams, and they were all dreams of war and chaos[\[3\]](#).”

“So then...” Mei Lin said, opening her eyes and looking at her rather pale complexion, “So maybe the night before, there had actually been no sound and it was just you dreaming.”

Shi Yi could not tell her that she had talked on the phone with Zhousheng Chen until the morning, so she merely shook her head. “I don’t know.”

“Shi Yi?”

“Hmm?”

“Do you feel that sometimes, the way you live is not very real?” Mei Lin asked her softly. “You’re not really interested in anything. You work only because you require a job. Since I met you, I haven’t noticed you being interested in anything. Apart from that husband of yours whom you suddenly met and then got married to.”

Shi Yi turned over, also feeling herself that her life was too dull.

Perhaps it was because she thought her previous life had been too exciting, with too many ups and downs – borne of a noble family, had a marriage of the

greatest riches and honor prearranged for her, disciplined under a man who easily could have the admiration of most women... and also hid in her heart a desire that was held in contempt by all people.

There were some things that, after you possessed them once, you would not even care about anymore.

Probably from when she was old enough to be aware and sensible about things, she had only been fixed upon the idea of “reuniting with him.” It was also because of this thinking, though, that she forced herself to integrate into this society and to use the most normal and ordinary identity to meet him again.

“In your opinion, if there really is reincarnation, is there any use for money? Is there any point to contending with or maneuvering against other people?” She contemplated briefly. “I think, really, there’s no point.”

“Yeah... But I don’t believe in reincarnation, so my life is more realistic and practical than yours. I like money, and I like people to respect me.” Mei Lin blew out a breath. “As for you, you only seem to value relationships. But that’s why being friends with people like you is the best. I never have to worry that you will do anything to hurt your friends.”

Shi Yi smiled, not saying anything.

Mei Lin’s thoughts turned to the husband that Shi Yi’s heart and mind were always thinking about, and she could not help sighing that she still had not had a chance to truly come in contact with him. A man who lived on the earth but would rather study Venus was quite fascinating.

Shi Yi was uncertain when he would be returning to the country and could only respond by saying that next time, when they had the chance, they would definitely all go out to dinner.

The competition came to a perfect conclusion, and Mei Lin successfully signed on three new artistes.

Two men and one woman, all who were very talented.

Mei Lin was sitting inside a barge, drinking some tea and cracking little jokes

with some of the professional voice actors while the new artistes sat amongst them looking somewhat shy. One of the young men, Shi Yi very much admired the timbre of his voice and his innate sense of drama and acting, and she could not help saying a few more words to him before they were to all leave the West Village.

The barge was moving along very slowly. As it floated out from under a stone bridge, she happened to just finish her conversation and throw a casual glance in the direction of the bank of the canal.

Someone was there, watching her with a smile.

He was wearing light beige trousers and a sky-blue, short-sleeved polo shirt. Clean-looking and ordinary. He did not have any luggage with him and simply stood in a shady area on the banks, his glasses held in his hand.

He was far-sighted, so removing his glasses allowed him to see more clearly, and judging from the way he looked, he seemed to have been watching for quite some time already.

If the scenic area had not still been closed to the public, he would have very easily faded into the crowds of people... Shi Yi anxiously twisted around and grabbed Mei Lin by the shoulders. "Hurry and pull over to the edge. Pull over to edge!"

Mei Lin was slightly taken aback. Seeing the person standing on the bank of the canal, she tried for quite some time to place who he was before asking somewhat uncertainly, "Your hubby's here?"

This one question aroused the curiosity of everyone on the barge.

People were always more interested in who would end up "getting" the beautiful girl rather than just the ordinary person. And furthermore, since the last awards ceremony, everyone knew that Shi Yi had someone who was so good it was enviable. Now, that person was here, so certainly they needed to look him over closely.

Of course, D. Wang was eyeing him over the most carefully.

Shi Yi only made a cursory noise in answer, her mind focused only on hurrying to land.

She was very worried that all these people's prying eyes would make him feel uncomfortable.

Zhousheng Chen was much more composed than she had expected, and when he saw everybody's gazes on him, he gave a very natural nod of his head in greeting. The boat docked at the nearest stone steps along the waterway, and Zhousheng Chen also strolled over to that same spot. As Shi Yi stepped ashore, he stretched out his hand to help her.

"Mr. Zhousheng, hello." Mei Lin was standing at the bow of the boat and was boldly and openly looking him up and down as she greeted him, "Every time, I have managed to miss the chance of meeting you. This time, I finally get to see you in person."

With one hand, Zhousheng Chen firmly supported Shi Yi as she took a large stride onto the stone steps and then stood beside him.

"Hello, Mei Lin," he smiled politely. "Shi Yi talks about you often. Thank you for taking care of her all this time."

Shi Yi was slightly surprised by this. She had always worried that she would trouble him and would not talk to him about her work matters.

Mei Lin smiled and exchanged some polite niceties with him.

While the boat was pulling away, Zhousheng Chen eyes moved over the entire group again, and he nodded and said goodbye.

His gaze intersected with D. Wang's before shifting away, but everything remained uneventful and peaceful.

After the boat had moved away from the canal's edge again, Shi Yi finally could not hold herself back and took his hand. "When did you get back? Why did you suddenly come back? What about your stuff over on the other end? The problems over here regarding entering the country, have they all been resolved,

too?”

Her questions came one immediately after another.

He smiled, putting on his glasses and then, to her surprise, he wrapped his arm around her waist.

His action had not been overly conspicuous and the pressure applied by his arm was not great, but it was enough to bring her into his embrace. Shi Yi was startled, and only when she was resting against his body did she detect that his arm was somewhat moist with perspiration as it pressed against her own arm. Skin-to-skin contact. It was not necessary to be bare before each other within a room. This moment was enough to cause her cheeks to burn.

“I arrived in Shanghai this morning. The main reason was because I was worried about you being alone here and whether you might have issues or problems. My matters have been resolved for the time being, including my research and the issues regarding entrance into the country.” He answered each of her questions one by one before, with a light smile, he asked her in return, “Any other questions?”

“Mm-hmm. One more.” Because he was behaving so intimately out in the open and under broad daylight, she also very naturally slid her arms up to rest on his shoulders as she asked softly, “Aside from worrying that I might encounter problems, was part of the reason for your return because... you missed me?”

To have him here beside her was so nice. Even the sky seemed clearer.

Shi Yi knew too clearly that all of her emotions — happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy — were tied up in him alone, but she gladly accepted this.

She gazed up at him.

His eyes were fixed on her as well. With a smile, he looked at her for some time before finally nodding.

“Yes, I really missed you.”

[1] 六月, 己亥. This is referring to the sixth month of the Lunar calendar. 己亥 “Ji-hai” is the thirty-sixth year in the traditional, 60 year cycle used to name

years (refer to chapter 9.2, footnote [3]).

[2] 东宫 “Dong Gong.” Literally means “Eastern Palace.” The Eastern Palace refers to the palace belonging to the crown prince because traditionally, it had been located on the eastern side of the imperial palace.

[3] 兵荒马乱 “bing huang ma luan.” This idiom is describing a society that is in tumult because of war times, but when taken to a broader sense, it could simply be used to describe something that is chaotic and disordered. When Shi Yi used this idiom, Mei Lin could be interpreting it that she was just dreaming of things that were chaotic and jumbled, but Shi Yi was probably meaning this literally, that they were dreams of the war and chaos she remembered from her past life.

Additional Comments:

It may be because I’ve watched way too many c-dramas, but can anyone else see this reunion scene playing out in their mind? Shi Yi is on a barge, her back to the shore as she chats politely. Camera cuts to the water’s edge where, unbeknownst to her, with the sun shining playfully through the leaves of a tree that have cast a slight shade upon him, a tall figure stands waiting for her, his back straight, the breeze tousling his hair slightly, a slight smile on his lips. Suddenly, she catches a view of that figure from the corner of her eye and whips around as the scene turns to slow motion. Cue up the romantic music. In slow motion, the man who has occupied her thoughts since their farewells in Bremen is slowly coming closer to her as the barge she is on moves closer.

Come on, I can’t be the only one who’s watched too many dramas and can visualize how the cameras would switch back and forth between the two of them, when the scene would change to slow-mo, and what sort of music would be playing, right? Yeah, I’m a sap. I love this scene. “Yes. I really missed you.” Excuse me while I go off to a corner to squeal.

(Also enjoyed that this chapter could give us lots of little pieces of information, from the origins of Zhousheng Chen’s name to Xiao Nanchen Prince’s bold personality, even as a youth the same age as Xiao Ren, to Mei Lin’s assessment

of Shi Yi, etc.)

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
34 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 11.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 11.2

[July 18, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [56 Comments](#)



Based on my past experience, I have already stocked up on boxes of tissues for any unexpected nosebleeds you may have. In case you are starting to feel faint, I have paper bags and expuery10 is kindly providing smelling salts. Now that we are sufficiently prepared... :D

Chapter 11.2 – Your First Adornment was Like You (2)

Shi Yi stared back at him, her eyes sparkling, perhaps a little too brightly for it seemed as if something was going to spill over from within them.

In the end, she lowered her head slightly. “Why did you deliberately look at D. Wang like that?”

“Me?” Putting his arm around her shoulder, Zhousheng Chen led her away

while joking, “I was paying respects to the one who lost.”

For an instant, Shi Yi was startled by before, with a “pfft,” she burst out into laughter.

Seeing him right here, she had unusually lots to say because she could not suppress her good mood. From complaining about the strange noises of that night to describing to him the local culinary delicacies, the things to tell him were simply too many to enumerate. He seemed very familiar with the layout of this place such that, when they walked by an old-fashioned dyehouse set-up for vistors to view, he was instantly able to recognize where they were. Shi Yi found this rather strange. “This side was only recently constructed and it’s still not open to the public yet. How come you seem to know it so well?”

“Because you were staying here, I had someone bring me a plan layout for me to look over.”

She gave an “oh,” staring out at the dyehouse that stood there beneath the blazing sun.

Cloths had been hung very high up, and length after length of long, narrow deep blue fabrics were lifted up slightly by the breeze before floating back down.



Photo taken at ancient style dyehouse in Wuzhen. ([Image credit](#))

This little slice of scenery, however, caused her to think of that twenty-day long siege she had once heard about. He had led his calvary of ten thousand. Day and night, unceasingly, they had fought to hold and defend Qing City. The enemy army had numbered one hundred and thirty thousand.

Twenty days later, the army of reinforcements finally arrived.

His retainers who had come had long since lost hope until they suddenly saw, on the city walls, several lengths of deep blue cloth that had been hung up high by several people. They were badly tattered as they rippled in the fierce wind.

Deep blue was the color of Xiao Nanchen Prince's banner.

Those several strips of cloth on the city walls that whipped about in the air were declaring that the city had not yet fallen.

She remembered how greatly the emotions of the man who had been narrating this to her had brimmed over when he spoke of this part. The man had said, the two hundred thousand reinforcement troops had instantly let out a resounding cheer that shook the heavens and continued until their voices were hoarse.

She remembered, her heart had pounded loudly as she listened, as if she had been at the scene in person.

Together, they continued strolling past the dyehouse and through long, narrow streets until they arrived at the room that Xiao Ren had been staying in earlier. This kid was very strange. His arrival had been unexpected and his departure was also without warning, leaving only a single piece of paper as his farewell.

There was only a short row of words: *I, then, shall not disturb the two of you.*

Zhousheng Chen's eyes swept over it quickly before he handed the note to Shi Yi and motioned that he was going to take a shower first. "It is too hot here, and I have perspired quite a bit. Wait a moment for me." After saying this, he pulled some clothing other people had prepared for him out from the drawers and stepped into the bathroom.

With the remote control, Shi Yi turned on the air conditioning and then closed all the windows.

Because the windows had been open to ventilate the room, it was very hot inside, and much time passed before the temperature started coming down.

When she finally felt the room was a comfortable temperature, she adjusted it back up slightly, worried that he would catch a cold when he came out from his shower.

While she was standing there with remote control raised and analyzing the temperature, Zhousheng Chen had already stepped out of the bathroom.

“What are you analyzing?”

“Temperature. Worried it’ll be too cold and you’ll catch a cold.”

Even from simply looking at her from behind, he could perceive her seriousness.

All of a sudden, his body started to grow hot. He wanted her.

This sort of feeling had come over him several times in Bremen, but each time, he had suppressed it. But although the person before him was dressed properly and modestly, there still seemed to be a force drawing him to her that he could not seem to break free from.

Perhaps, he did not need to break free of it.

As Zhousheng Chen walked over to her, Shi Yi had already finished adjusting the temperature and had set the remote control down on the desk. He stepped close to her, lowered his head, and caressed her neck with his lips. Shi Yi instantly froze but then the next second, her body softened and melted.

She liked to wear collared, cotton dresses because they were not overly revealing.

Zhousheng Chen hooked his finger onto the back neckline and pulled it down slightly, exposing some of the skin of her back. His kisses continued there. This unfamiliar sensation was somewhat torturous to her, and she shifted her body slightly.

“You don’t need to turn it up too high. We will be sweating later,” he told her in a low voice.

Shi Yi answered with an “mm” and closed her eyes tightly.

The whole time, he stood behind her, lingering between her neck and back. He called her name gently and did not try to hide the change that was occurring in

his lower body as he held her in front of himself, pressed tightly to him.

Shi Yi could sense that this time, he really wanted it.

She grew even more anxious.

She wanted to give it to him, but she was also afraid.

Right on the brink of it happening, she started to fear. Fear that he would be disappointed with her body. Fear that she did not know enough about this and would cause him to feel that it was dry and uninteresting..... The more she thought, the more nervous she became until eventually Zhousheng Chen could sense it as well. "Is this not a good time?"

She answered quietly, "No..."

"Or do you not like this?"

"No..."

"Scared?"

She wanted to say yes, but thinking about it, last time in Bremen, they had already completely bared themselves to one another inside the hotel room, and that time, she had been the one who had initiated it. Why was she suddenly so scared now?... She did not know.

With both his hands, Zhousheng Chen took her dress by its hem and lifted it up from the bottom, taking the dress off of her. He tossed it lightly onto the desk.

He did not disrobe himself and instead, shifted so that he was against her skin and began to kiss her even more deeply, from her collarbone to her shoulder. Her face and ears glowed red as Shi Yi tried to keep away from the touch of her body to his behind her, but one of his hands held her, not allowing her to move away. Neither anxious nor impatient, only slowly taking things deeper and deeper. When his hand started to undo her undergarments, he asked, "Do you remember I told you I like to collect Wu songs?"

Shi Yi gave an "mm." A very tiny, imperceptible sound.

She could feel the clasp of her bra being undone, and then the undergarment fell to the ground.

“Are you familiar with Wu songs?”

“No.....” How could she be familiar with those sexually evocative poems for the bedchambers that had once circulated through the common folk?

Zhousheng Chen’s palm was somewhat rough, or at least, to her skin, the feeling of its presence was very strong. When his hand stroked over her bosom, she gasped lightly, and her eyes shut themselves even tighter so that even her lashes were quivering faintly.

Beside her ear, his voice was very soft, very low. *“At morning, upon the terrace. At evening, resting in the orchid pond. Borrowing the light of the moon to pick the lotus flower. Night after night, I take the lotus seed.”*

Vaguely, she could hear the suggestive overtones of romantic relations.

But her mind had already drifted away somewhere. This was her first experience being so physically intimate with a man, and her senses were very much heightened.

No matter where his hand slid to, she felt the urge to evade it. Whether this was intimacy or torture, she could no longer tell.

“In ancient texts, the ‘lian’ in ‘lotus flower’ [莲荷 ‘lian he’] is substituted in place of the ‘lian’ in ‘loving tenderness’ [爱怜 ‘ai lian’],” he told her in a low tone. “‘Lotus,’ therefore, means love.”

There was perspiration on his arm as it rubbed against her body.

Sunlight passed through the window glass and fell upon her body, which no longer had any garments to conceal it.

Finally, he turned her around to face him. Lowering his head, he kissed her lips as he removed his own shirt and trousers.

In her hazy perception, he never ceased reciting to her in a quiet voice those poems she had never before heard and should be shared only between lovers. Most were too metaphorical, so he would explain them to her. His speech was low and quiet but focused and thorough as he took these sensual, amorous poems that were laden with sexually suggestive overtones and explained them

like he would if he was lecturing in a college classroom.

Their bodies pressed up against one another, fitting together tightly.

He, however, still did not progress his actions to the next step. Shi Yi could already feel that her awareness was drifting away, and she did not know what she should do. For a moment, she even felt that this must be an hallucination, and she questioned herself whether she was truly here, together with Zhousheng Chen, skin against skin and nothing between them.....

In a low voice, he told her, "I am going to start now. It may hurt somewhat."

A flush spread across her body.

She did not even dare to breathe. It was something that she knew, but from his lips, it was seduction.

Serious, seductive lovemaking.

All of her senses seemed as if they were suspended. His slightest motions caused her to inhale lightly from anxiousness.

"When I was little, I recited 'Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals.' The elders in my family all would say, 'The charms of beauty; gleaming teeth; the music of Zheng and Wei — these are pursued for the pleasure they bring.'" Zhousheng Chen's voice seemed as if it had been burnished, carrying in it a hint of huskiness due to thirst. "Beautiful women and music for entertainment purposes are both things that you should not allow yourself to become too absorbed in. Have you heard it before, this particular saying?"

Biting down on her lip, she gave an "mm."

"I once regarded those as below my consideration, believing that neither was worth becoming absorbed in. Now, though, I do not think that."

He was trying. Her body quivered from the pain.

Beads of perspiration trickled off his body and fell on hers. Zhousheng Chen did not dare make any hasty movements. When the pain subsided and grew faint, she summoned her courage and arched upward to meet him. Zhousheng Chen was somewhat taken aback and paused momentarily. Looking down at her face that had turned slightly pale, he saw it was slick with perspiration..... "Shi Yi?" he

suddenly called her.

Shi Yi's eyes fluttered open.

In her mind, this was where it had all began.

Many memories, both from her past life and this present one, all seemed to surge up, one upon another. Memories of swirling sand and dust, of the smoke of beacon fires surrounding on all sides, of him sitting alone in the library tower, of him riding with her as he spurred the horse across Chang'an..... If, that day, they had not reined in the horse and halted the direction they had been headed in.....

Zhousheng Chen was very patient and would continually ask her softly, "Are you still okay?"

In the beginning, she would answer him, but later, she could only give a disjointed "mm" as she gripped tightly to the bed sheet beneath her. Her hands would clench and then loosen. The numerous, jumbled images in her mind were far from her now. The real person, the person who was here with her, was him. Yet, it also was not him. Shi Yi's palms were covered in sweat. She stretched a hand up to his face. "Zhou—... sheng Chen."

His voice was low as he answered her.

"I love you," she told him in a hoarse voice.

He answered with a quiet "mm."

Her hand caressed his face. It was covered in perspiration. Their two bodies pressed down upon the bed sheet. It was hot and damp.

At last, he held her in his arms and rolled to his back so that she could lay atop him to rest. Grabbing the thin, cotton blanket, he pulled it so that it covered most of their bodies. Exhausted, Shi Yi could not open her eyes as she rested her face against his chest and listened to the beat of his heart.

There was very long period of quiet, so quiet that she nearly drifted off into sleep.

Her fingers, though, could not resist and moved to stroke the skin at his waist. “Before, did you ever... with someone else...”

With eyes closed, he chuckled, “No.”

Shi Yi also gave a little giggle, and in a sleepy voice, she quietly stated, “And you aren’t ever allowed to either.”

“Yes, it won’t ever happen.” His hand was on her back and lightly slid over it.

“If I end up dying first, then I’ll trouble you to suffer through for a little while. Next life, I’ll make it up to you.” Shi Yi felt she was being overly sentimental and melodramatic, but she still could not hold back the words. It was only in this time that she dared say these things to this great scientist.

He let out a slight laugh and then, lightly, he answered with an “mm.”

Satisfied, Shi Yi lifted her head and placed a soft kiss on his lips. Then, she carried on with gently caressing the skin around his waist until gradually, her breathing grew steady. There, lying on top of him, she fell into a contented slumber.

Additional Comments:

Alright, you’ve all waited for this. My first boating translation. Of course, it had to be with Zhousheng Chen, who somehow managed to make it poetic, sexy, and geeky (with his lecture style explanations) all at the same time... Actually, this scene is really quite different from other ones I’ve read. While I don’t doubt there was passion, this scene almost felt peaceful — still, if I might say — even with the nervousness. It’s the considerateness, the gentleness, and the poetry that all seemed to come together to weave a quiet, yet oh-so-sensual atmosphere..

I tried not to break up your reading by keeping the Wu song explanation within the body of the text and not footnoting it. I think it’s pretty clear now, but if you don’t get it, drop me a comment and I’ll try to explain it better.

I know the highlight to all of you is very likely that scene, but I must LOL at the

“respects” Zhousheng Chen paid to D. Wang. And that story about the blue cloth that declared that Qing City had not fallen and Xiao Nanchen Prince’s troops were still valiantly guarding the city. I teared up. Twice. When I was translating it and then when I was reading through to do my edits. He doesn’t even really make a physical appearance, but that image of the tattered cloth whipping in the wind and the tenacity of Xiao Nanchen Prince and his army touches me.

Anyways... I’ll just head back to the corner I was squealing in last post and continue to hand out tissues and paper bags. *singing* Row, row, row your boat...

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

35 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 11.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 11.3

[July 22, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [38 Comments](#)



So, I gather you were all shouting, “Finally!” last post. :p Can it get any sweeter?

Chapter 11.3 – Your First Adornment was Like You (3)

When she awoke, she could feel him gently stroking her back.

There was no lust in his action. It was similar to holding a cat in your arms, as you cooed and stroked it instinctively. Shi Yi opened her eyes but then quietly closed them again.

Zhousheng Chen, I love you.

She felt that it could not have only been in their previous life or even two

lifetimes ago that they had been entangled together, but that every lifetime, every incarnation, their lives had been interwoven together.

So, when had it been? And what other things would happen?

Life after life, entrusted to one another.

Yes, that was it. Life after life, entrusted to one another.

The thoughts drifted languidly in her mind, and after a little while, her lips turned up into a noiseless laugh.

Zhousheng Chen detected her movement and, in a low voice, asked, "You're awake?"

"Mm."

"Let's stay here tonight. Tomorrow, we will return to Shanghai, alright?"

"Mm."

"After... there will be a long period of time that I need to stay in Zhenjiang."

"You're going back there to stay?"

"Yes, back there to stay."

Shi Yi pondered for a moment. "How about I resign and go back with you?"

Zhousheng Chen did not answer her immediately. He seemed to be weighing out the options. She supposed, Zhousheng Chen's concern was likely regarding his family, but she did not want to continue to be separated from him now that he was back in the country.

"It is better if you remain in Shanghai. Zhenjiang is not far. I can come back every other day. Or, on the weekends, you can go stay with me in Zhenjiang for two days," he suggested.

Shi Yi did not argue any further. "Alright. If you are coming back every other day, then let's stay in my home. Your place is too big. If you're not there, I won't really be used to living there by myself."

She thought to herself, the decisions he made would, without a doubt, be the best for both of them.

“Alright.”

When evening came, they left the hotel to go for dinner.

Zhousheng Chen was not as particular as Xiao Ren and had not made any deliberate arrangements regarding meals, suggesting simply that they find a nearby place to grab something to eat. Shi Yi immediately felt much relieved. It seemed, apart from when he was in Zhenjiang with his family, the Zhousheng Chen she was familiar with had all along maintained his own lifestyle.

It was simple, but he was not indifferent about it.

His attire was neat, proper, and fitting, and personal belongings were minimal. He did not enjoy social engagements and, even more so, did not like using things that wasted time, such as mobile phones. At fixed times, in fixed places, he would carry out regular activities. Eating and drinking were viewed as necessities in life. As for other things... Holding his arm, Shi Yi tried hard for a while to think of more, but then laughed.

Zhousheng Chen looked down at her.

She explained to him, “I was thinking about what you have in common with other men, but I couldn’t think of very many things. For instance, you watch useless television dramas, too, but to be able to watch ‘A Step Into the Past’ seventy-nine times... That’s just...”

He chuckled, “It’s true. I watch it when I want to pass the time. I don’t want to waste time to look for another drama to watch, so I will simply rewatch that one. It is quite amusing in itself to be able to watch one scene and then instantly be able to to conjure up in your mind the next scene and its dialogue.”

Giggling, she hugged his arm tightly like a little child.

Shi Yi called Hong Xiaoyu and arranged to meet up with her for dinner.

They went to a small restaurant first, and after chatting casually for a short while, Hong Xiaoyu and Du Feng arrived. These sorts of small eateries in scenic watertowns all served common fare that local people would eat or else some

specialty foods, so aside from a few dishes, there was nothing that stood out.

A dish of red-braised mutton[1] was served. Zhousheng Chen was about to bring his chopsticks to it, but Shi Yi advised him quietly that lamb meat should be avoided during the summer because consuming it would cause excessive internal heat[2], etc, etc. Nodding, Zhousheng Chen switched to eat some Lake Tai whitefish[3] instead, and sure enough, he did not touch the lamb anymore.



Red-braised mutton, left and Lake Tai whitefish, right. (Image credit [1](#) and [2](#))

Seeing this, Hong Xiaoyu gave a dramatic sigh. “You know, when I was ordering, you didn’t say anything. Here I am, wanting to eat it, and you’re telling your hubby not to, saying stuff like you’re worried about excessive internal heat... It’s so true that ‘a daughter married off is like spilled water[4].’ You don’t have eyes for me anymore.”

Shi Yi laughed, “Anywhere you travel to, you’ll want to eat the specialty dishes there. I knew that I wouldn’t be able to convince you otherwise, so I didn’t bother wasting my breath.”

Once two women who had known each other since childhood started to squabble, they would have an endless amount to say.

Neither was able to win in the battle of words, but to the two men beside them, who were strangers to each other, they were very entertaining.

Du Feng poured out some liquor and slid a glass over to Zhousheng Chen.

With a smile, he declined gracefully, “I’m sorry, but I do not drink.”

Du Feng did not seem to be concerned. “Just as a gesture. Just one sip.”

Hong Xiaoyu also urged him disapprovingly, “When men meet, it’s a must that they drink at least a little bit.”

After contemplating briefly, Zhousheng Chen picked up the glass, but Shi Yi immediately snatched it from his hand.

She threw a glance at Hong Xiaoyu. “Don’t you go forcing him to drink.”

“Huh? How did I force him?” Hong Xiaoyu did not know whether to laugh or cry. “I only tried to persuade him with one sentence. Just one sentence, missy.”

Shi Yi picked up the glass, brought it to her nose, and sniffed. “The alcohol content in this isn’t that low.”

The meaning behind her words was very obvious. Nearly infuriated to death by her protectiveness over Zhousheng Chen, Hong Xiaoyu lightly rapped her glass with her chopsticks. “You’re too much — “

Du Feng laughed, “How about this? We’ll let your husband off the hook, but —“

Worried that they would say something else that would put Zhousheng Chen in a difficult position, Shi Yi did not even wait for Du Feng to finish what he was saying and took a large swig of the alcohol.

No one had expected this, and so, no one had tried to stop her.

When she set the glass back down, she stated, “Alright, I drank it for him. You guys aren’t allowed to make any more demands.”

Hong Xiaoyu knew that she, too, did not drink at all. Seeing that Shi Yi was being so serious about the matter, she did not dare continue. Hastily, she rubbed a hand over her heart and declared, “This is what you call true love, ah. Compared to you, I don’t even come close.”

Shi Yi smiled, “It was your first time seeing him. It’s okay.”

She knew the way she was defending Zhousheng Chen was a little overprotective and had not left much face for her friend.

But she simply could not watch him have to suffer even the tiniest bit through anything. Even if it was just a small furrowing of his brows or slight hesitation in something, she did not want to see it.

Shi Yi now reached to drink some tea, trying to suppress that uncomfortable taste of alcohol.

Something warm came and covered her hand that had been resting on the edge of her chair. Zhousheng Chen held that hand in his own as she turned her head to look at him. She could feel he was enveloping her hand into his palm.

He was not someone who could comfortably display his private feelings in front of outsiders.

As a result, Shi Yi merely smiled at him to indicate that he did not need to say anything, that she understood. What he wanted to say, she knew already.

He blamed her somewhat but also blamed himself. He was upset she had suddenly consumed the liquor and he had not been fast enough to stop her from doing it. Now, the look in his eyes was rather stern. Shi Yi lowered her head and smiled before turning away so that she was no longer looking at him. Out of the blue, she wondered, if something went wrong in the laboratory, would Zhousheng Chen have this same expression on his face?

Shi Yi truly did not have even the slightest alcohol tolerance.

When they left the small building where their restaurant had been, her face was already slightly red, and she could not seem to reign in her smiling expression. So this was the reason why people liked to have a few drinks during happy occasions?

She brought him to listen to *pingtan*. Because the contest staff, participants, and media had already left that afternoon, there were only a few random visitors who were being hosted and entertained for various reasons for free by the officials of the scenic district.

On the stage, *pingtan* rang out while down below, there were row after row of benches that were basically empty.

They were sitting in the northwest corner of the theatre. In the beginning, she had simply leaned herself against his shoulder, but later, using the little bit of tipsiness caused by the alcohol as justification, she slowly slid down until she was lying on his thighs. She lay there like this, her head tilted to gaze up at him. She

would never tire of looking at him.

Her eyes were fixated on Zhousheng Chen for quite some time, and so, he eventually placed his arms on the back of the bench in front of him. Resting his forehead on his arms, he looked down at her.

Or rather it could be said, he allowed her to look up at him even more freely and to her heart's content.

He was wearing a plain black polo shirt. His face had been shaved clean. Very clean.

Perhaps because he spent all of his time in a laboratory and everything he came in contact with or did had only to do with research, he did not look at all like a man who was nearing thirty years old. At most, he looked like a graduate student in his twenties.

Shi Yi reached up with her hand and rubbed his chin. "This morning, there was still some... um, newly grown stubble."

Zhousheng Chen smiled at her. "Did it scratch you this morning?"

His voice was very mild as he asked this, but her mind sprang to other images. The flush in her cheeks deepened, and she mumbled, "I'm not going to talk to you about that."

The alcohol's influence amplified all the emotions that were rolling like waves in her heart.

Her hand stroked his cheek as she said quietly, "I remember, there is one book that has a really well-written line in it."

"What is it?"

" 'All my life I longed to be kept carefully by someone, to be safely placed, to be tenderly looked after. To protect me from fear, to protect me from suffering, to protect me from being lost, to protect me from being alone and helpless.[5]' "

He gave an "mm." He could generally understand this sort of "little woman[6]" mentality [vulnerable and to be protected], although he did not agree with it.

However, in this very moment, he felt that this Shi Yi, with her head resting on his thighs while she lay on the bench, was very befitting of this sort of care.

Staring up at him, she burst out in laughter. “You definitely have the wrong idea. Zhousheng Chen, you’ve misunderstood what I meant.”

“Have I?” he smiled.

“What I am thinking is, when you have finished all that you want to do, you only need everyday to go do your research on your planet, Venus. The rest, you can leave to me. I will cook and make tea for you and tenderly take care of you. I will keep you from weariness, keep you from suffering, keep you from needing to constantly be on the move, keep you from being alone, without anyone to trust and lean upon.”

Her eyes sparkled, envisioning this as she gazed up at him like she was looking at her most cherished treasure.

He was her most cherished treasure.

Zhousheng Chen returned her gaze, and for a moment, there was only silence.

An instant later, he touched her cheek with the back of his hand. “Your face is very red.”

“Really?” Shi Yi’s hands immediately flew up to cover her cheeks, and she could feel their slight heat. “I can’t drink. The slightest bit and I’ll be tipsy —”

“But, that red in your cheeks is very pretty.”

Shi Yi stared disbelievingly at him.

He smiled. “It’s true.”

As a result, perhaps, of the stimulus effects of the alcohol, she was having great difficulty controlling her emotions. She felt her nose tingle and tears were on the verge of flowing. Hurriedly turning onto her side, she wrapped her arms around his waist and buried her head into one of his thighs.

“What’s wrong?” she heard Zhousheng Chen’s voice ask her.

“I’m a little dizzy...” Her voice was muffled.

“If you are not feeling well, we could go back to the room?”

“No... Just let me hold you for a little bit and I’ll be better. If we start walking now, I’ll feel even more dizzy.”

Her cheek laid against the material of his trousers as she answered him in a soft voice. Her eyes were moist, but her heart was indescribably happy.

Zhousheng Chen did not seem to notice the change in her. Gently, he patted her back, like he was trying to coax her to sleep.

The *pingtan* song had reached its end, and the entire theatre was very quiet. On the stage, the cast members seemed to be taking in the small number of people in the audience and were discussing whether they should end the show earlier. However, the things taking place up there had long since ceased to have anything to do with what was happening down here.

[1] 红烧羊肉 “hong shao yang rou.” Red-braised mutton is a dish with an Islamic (Hui people) influence and has a long history. 红烧 “red-cooking,” “red-braised,” or “braised in brown sauce” cooking is a technique where the meat is panfried and then stewed in soy sauce that is flavored heavily with seasoning. The meat comes out tender and takes on a distinctive red-brown color.

[2] As a recap, in traditional Chinese medicine, there are six external “evils” (also called pernicious influences) that can penetrate into the body and result in illness: wind, cold, damp, heat (also called fire), summer heat, and dryness. Shi Yi is referring to the heat/fire evil, when the internal heat/fire has been thrown off balance and too much internal heat can cause damage.

[3] 白水鱼 “bai shui yu.” Literally, this translates as white, water fish. It also has the name 太湖白鱼 “Lake Tai whitefish”, which I have chosen to use in the translation. This slim, flat fish is found mainly in Lake Tai (or Lake Taihu), which is located ~60 km away from Wuzhen, and is known for its delicate meat. It is considered a rare species of the lake and also a relatively precious freshwater fish. The fish is often steamed with ginger and served with scallions and hot oil poured over it.

[4] 嫁出去的女泼出去的水. Like water that has been spilled or tossed and

cannot be put back into its original vessel, a married daughter no longer belongs to the parents or family. Here, Hong Xiaoyu is using the idiom to say, Shi Yi's heart now belongs only to her husband and not to her good friend anymore.

[5] This is a line from the novel, 时有女子 “The Times Have Women” by 匡匡. I have seen it quoted in several novels now. The translation of this particular line from the novel was actually done by decembi over on her [blog when she reviewed “Love Can Do Miracles”](#), which also quotes this line.

[6] 小女人 “xiao nü ren.” Literally, this means “little woman.” There really is no English equivalent to this, but it is generally describing a lady-like woman that is docile, gentle, and vulnerable such that she evokes the protective nature of men.

Additional Comments:

First off, a big shout out to decembi, who generously allowed me to use her translation of that one particular line. Why reinvent the wheel when it's already been done so masterfully? Thank you, decembi! For those of you who don't know her yet, you must check out her [blog](#), which contains amazing translations and original fiction.

Like I said before, I love the entire chapter 11 for all the sweet OTP moments, but this last image really seems the most romantic to me. Shi Yi is lying on the bench, her head resting on his thighs, as Zhousheng Chen leans over, places his arms across the back of the bench in front of them, and leans forward to look down at her. His arms, face, and body have created a protective canopy over this “little woman” of his. I'm not saying Shi Yi is the demure, vulnerable type but that she invokes in Zhousheng Chen the desire to protect her as if she was one, despite not agreeing with that mentality. I am loving how his body is physically doing already what he is thinking.

But then, for Shi Yi to turn it around and tell him, no, that line is not what she wants for herself, it is what she desires for him — to keep him like a most cherished treasure. Zhousheng Chen is very astute and I don't believe he is very often wrong in reading people's intentions, so even though the author doesn't

explicitly describe his thoughts when he heard this, I imagine it must have rocked him pretty hard.❤️ I love this couple!

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
36 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 12.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 12.1

[July 25, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [45 Comments](#)



What is normal life like for Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi?

Chapter 12.1 – To Have Ever Been Free From Worry? (1)

Since Zhousheng Chen had officially returned to the country, she would have to bring him to formally pay a visit to her family.

There had been no official wedding, and hence, Shi Yi had tactfully explained that the two of them had decided to be together, but due to the numerous and complicated rules of his family, the wedding reception needed to be delayed for a little while. In regards to their status now as legally married husband and wife, she truly did not dare admit this to her parents because they would, without a doubt, be furious. Already legally married, yet the elders on each side had not even met yet... Even she knew that this was unacceptable.

Although her parents were not very happy about it, when they saw how insistent Shi Yi was, they reluctantly accepted that the two were “together.”

“Oh, ‘a grown daughter cannot be kept at home[\[1\]](#).’” While Shi Yi was washing her face, Mother, who was standing behind her, took the opportunity to lament in a low voice, “Good thing Little Zhou looks like he’s an honest, reliable boy, otherwise I’d really —”

Shi Yi patted her face dry and picked up a wooden comb. “Mm-hm. I also think he’s honest... and reliable.”

“But it’s not enough for two people to be in love. You need the protection of having a legally recognized status, too.” Mother took the comb from her, put her hair up into a ponytail for her, and then tied it simply. “And also, don’t start living together too early.”

Contrary to expectation, Shi Yi did not utter a word in response.

Her mother detected that something was odd, and when she saw her awkward expression, she immediately understood.

She cuffed Shi Yi lightly across the back of her head, then with a frown, sighed, “Forget it. You young people... Just different from our generation.”

Shi Yi took the comb back from her and set it back where it belonged as she answered quietly, “No matter what, in this lifetime, I will only be with him. That will never change.”

“A lifetime? One lifetime is a very long time —”

Mother wanted to say more, but Shi Yi had already slipped away and smilingly evaded the issue.

The household norm was that her father was the one who cooked. As she stepped out of the bathroom, she discovered that Zhousheng Chen was also in the kitchen, and she hurriedly walked over. He was leisurely carrying out a conversation with her father, and when she walked in, he was handing her father a freshly peeled and washed green onion. Smiling at him, she instructed, “You go out. I’ll help here.”

He looked at her, and with the back of his right hand, he gently bumped her ponytail. “It’s alright.”

This was the first time he had seen her with this hairstyle, so naturally, he stared at it a little longer.

The two of them gazed at each other behind her elderly father, who was busy cooking. Red tinged her cheeks slightly from his gaze, and she stretched her arms forward and helped him roll the sleeves of his dress shirt slightly higher. Then, she noiselessly stood on her tiptoes and placed a quick kiss on his cheek.

In that instant before her father turned around, she quickly took two steps backwards. “Um... I’m going out now. You put on a good showing here, then.”

“Little Zhou, here, pass me the green onion.”

Zhousheng Chen was still clutching the green onion in his hand, and finally, half a beat behind, he managed to recover and hand it over.

And she had already fled the scene.

A very peaceful, simple lunch.

The scene of Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi sitting together, side by side as they quietly ate, was very harmonious, and even Mother, who still had considerable murmurs of complaint, had to admit that they were very fitting for one another. Before they left, Shi Yi’s parents pulled him back to have a conversation.

Essentially, her parents would ask questions and he would answer them one by one, entirely conducting himself in a manner of saying what knew and speaking without any reserve.

Her mother’s [paternal] aunt had once been a lady of wealthy background in olden day Shanghai, and having witnessed this, Mother naturally used it as a model to speculate about Zhousheng Chen’s mother. Probingly, she asked whether he had grown up under the care of a nanny and his mother had not really looked after him. Zhousheng Chen did not deny this. Shi Yi’s mother smiled in what could be considered relief. As Shi Yi was leaving, her mother told her softly, “I’m guessing his mother was the young miss of one of those rich families in the past. People and children from those types of families are not approachable, and they will have a bit of a temper, too.”

Even though it was not quite accurate, there were similarities.

Shi Yi promised that she would carefully try to get along with his mother.

Her parents' home was approximately a thirty-minute drive away from where she lived.

Stopping before an intersection, they got off the car and walked side by side, following the street toward her community compound. Recalling the dialogue earlier with her parents, she pretended to casually ask, "When you were a kid, you didn't grow up under your mom's care?"

"Yes, but also not quite." Zhousheng Chen chuckled, "Why did you wait so long to ask?"

Her bluff exposed, she pursed her lips and reflected for a moment before saying, "I was scared if I asked you outright, you would get mad..."

"It was more or less like what your parents are thinking. My mother did not personally raise her own children. Myself and my younger brother and sister were all raised by other people, and moreover, each of us had a different nanny."

With an "oh," she commented, "No wonder I get the sense that you and your brother... aren't very close."

He did not deny this. "Indeed, we are not well-acquainted with one another. I moved away from home very early, and it was only when he was about to be married that we started having somewhat more contact with each other."

While she was speaking, two small teddy bear poodles darted over, running circles around her before suddenly breaking out into loud barking.

Zhousheng Chen swiftly reached out and pulled her into his arms to shield her. It was only until after the dog owner had dashed up, stopped the dogs with a loud scolding, and hurriedly apologized to them did Zhousheng Chen finally relax. Initially, she had been shocked, but she had not really been afraid. Rather, it was Zhousheng Chen's protective behavior that caused her to be somewhat surprised.

He squeezed her hand. Their palms were both a little sweaty.

She had broken out in a cold sweat because she had been frightened by the dogs, and his reason was because he was worried for her.

“I’m not that scared of dogs,” Shi Yi protested softly when he loosened his embrace around her.

She seemed to hear him give an “mm” in reply. After a brief pause, he said, “I was scared.”

“Huh?” Shi Yi turned her eyes to him.

His manner was very calm as he looked at her, and after several seconds passed, he suddenly smiled and stroked her ponytail with his hand. “Scared they would bite you.”

A subtle feeling of intimacy.

But even this was enough to cause her heart to melt, and she reached over to hold his hand.

He was protecting her, worried that she would be hurt.

When they arrived at home, Shi Yi tidied up the study for him and placed in there the books he frequently read and his laptop computer that he had packed and moved over. He really did not have many day-to-day items. Besides a few men’s essential items, books, two computers, and clothing, he did not have any other unnecessary things. One of his computers seemed to be dedicated to his laboratory work while the other was for his personal use.

Normally in the study, she only required her laptop computer and a single desk lamp, so her electrical outlet was the most basic type.

Now that there were these two computers, she was afraid there would not be enough sockets to use.

“These two computers of yours, will they ever be on simultaneously?”

From the living room, Zhousheng Chen answered, “Yes.”

“There likely won’t be enough sockets to plug into, then.” She pondered, “You sit for a while first. I’ll go downstairs to the convenience store and buy a larger

one with more sockets.”

“The convenience store downstairs?” He had walked up to the door of the study as he asked her.

“Mm-hmm. Otherwise, there won’t be enough sockets to plug in the lamp...”

“Alright. I understand.”

While he was saying this, he had already turned around and was heading out.

When he shut the front door behind him, she finally clued in. She had still been treating him as a guest just a moment ago.

But he, apparently, was already regarding himself as the man of the house.

Leaning against the desk with her hand, she felt a sense of happiness that seemed surreal. Since they had returned from Wuzhen, some things had changed. Small details, but they were very apparent. She was not referring to the acts of intimacy between a man and a woman, but something... even more. She could sense the care, the place of importance she held to him.

It was like in the past, that same sort of importance she had once been to him.

Even though he did not remember any of it.

Apart from being passionate about scientific research and economics, this man lacked interest in any other matter, yet he was starting to protect her. To act like any other ordinary man and let her order him to go buy daily necessities...

With a white cloth, she wiped down every corner of the study. After a while, she squatted down to stare at the many history books on the bottommost shelf of her bookcase.

Most were elegantly bound and beautifully printed but looked as if they had not been flipped through.

Indeed, many of these she had bought and then only looked through once.

Seeing these books reminded her of the paper she had sandwiched inside a magazine and set in her handbag. Pulling it out, she placed it into a new file folder and then very carefully filed it on top of that shelf of books. She did not know how long it would take to write about those memories. She only hoped

that she would not forget too many of them, that she could, as much as possible, detailedly and accurately record it all.

Those things about him that only she knew.

Dinner was casual, and they simply ate cold dishes and noodles tossed with scallions, oil, and soy sauce before he headed into the study.

Shi Yi sat down at the small table out on the balcony, pulled out several sheets of paper, and began mapping out her book's chronology. Several hours passed by very quickly. Her normal working hours were from afternoon until late into the night, past eleven o'clock, and hence, she still did not feel drowsy. Seeing that it was still quiet in the study, she placed some snacks onto a dish, knocked on the door, and then pushed it open.

Zhousheng Chen seemed to be accustomed to being alone. Turning around, he stared blankly at her for several seconds before his mind snapped out of its focus on work. "Sleepy?"

"No." She stepped inside and set the snacks and a glass of warm milk in front of him. "I was worried you might be hungry. If you are, have a little bit to eat. If not, then just drink the glass of milk."

He smiled, picked up the glass, and took a drink of the milk.

Setting it back down, he dragged the empty chair beside him closer to himself. "Sit here. I'll talk to you for a little while."

She gave an "mm" and sat down.

Although the way he said this was a little strange, his meaning was that he wanted to spend time with her. She supposed he felt that he had ignored her the whole night.

While they were casually chatting, he opened up his personal email account.

It was organized very systematically.

She saw that among the more than dozen or so names of people, there was one folder named "Shi Yi," and she immediately remembered those days when she had corresponded back and forth with him through email. Over a period of

more than half a year, they had not had any other form of communication, and she had been so discouraged at the time. However, now that she understood him, she realized this was the method of communication he was accustomed to using.

It was very direct, and he could control when he responded.

It was an especially efficient way to manage personal relationships...

Zhousheng Chen suddenly asked her, “When you see this string of words, are you able to think of another one with a similar pattern?”

Shi Yi glanced at his computer. In a Microsoft Word window, there was only a single series of words:

One Red Calyx, Two-Colored Lotus, Three Cheerful Steps, Four Bamboo Courtyards, Five Night-Watches’ Orders, Six to the End, Seven(th) Wife, Eight Slaps at the Savage, Nine Weaving Looms, Ten(th) Month’s Peaches, Hundred Aptly Delicate and Lovely, Thousand Year Tune.

She understood now and laughed, “These are all names of *ci* poem patterns[\[2\]](#). But the person who listed them out this way is quite amusing.”

“Can you think of anything similar?”

Shi Yi pondered for a while. There were some Chinese medicinal herbs that would fit the pattern. “One Spot of Red, Two-Leaf Pattern, Three-Cornered Grass, Four Seasons of Green [Evergreen], Five-Sided Fruit [Starfruit], Six Harmonies Song... Seven-Leaf Lotus, Eight-Cornered Maple [Chinese Alangium Root], Nine Miles of Fragrance, Ten Scattered Ashes... Um, Hundred Plants’ Soot, Thousand Days of Scarlet.”

“All Chinese herbs?” He had not expected that she would use traditional medicinal herbs to answer the challenge.

She nodded.

He quickly wrote down her answer and pasted it back into the reply to that email.

His fingers then rapidly typed another line of words: *This is the answer Shi Yi*

gave.

“Who are you sending it to?” she asked curiously when she saw him type her name.

“Mei Xing.” He chuckled, “He always likes to send out group emails with things like this for fun.”

She thought about that man. Mm-hmm, that was consistent with his character.

Zhousheng Chen finished the remainder of the milk and closed his computer. “I will be leaving at four o’clock in the morning. Do you have work tomorrow? Or are you just resting at home?”

“No work...” She picked up the empty glass. “I told Mei Lin I’m... honeymooning.”

“Honeymoon,” he mused and then smiled. “Indeed, it can be considered a honeymoon.”

On such a late night, when all was at rest...

He had given a simple affirmation. And when she glanced over at him, warmth unwittingly spread over her cheeks.

[1] 女大不中留 “nǚ dà bù zhōng liú.” An idiom that means, a daughter should be married off when she is grown. It is not advisable for her to remain with the family for a long period of time (nor, in some cases, can you keep her heart in the family). Often, when a parent or elder is saying this, that person is actually chastising the daughter for siding with an outsider, usually the man she loves.

[2] 词牌 “cí pái.” There is a type of poetry called “*ci* poems.” These poems were actually composed so that they were sung to a tune. The tune had a fixed melody and tempo. Multiple poems could be composed but sung to the same tune and hence, it was like a pattern or formula to follow to compose the poem. This type of tune was called “*ci pai*” or what I have translated as “*ci* poem patterns.” Each *ci pai* was given a name, possibly related to the lyrics from the first time the tune was sung, but the origins of the names have generally since

been lost and are merely names . New *ci* poems that are composed to the tunes may have nothing to do with the name. There are more than 1000 *ci pai*. For Shi Yi to instantly recognize these as *ci pai* names again demonstrates how learned she is in literature and poetry.

Additional Comments:

sigh I tried my best, but I know the translations of the riddle and the answer Shi Yi gave are >_<. Just in case you didn't get what was going on...

Mei Xing sent a group email with a riddle in it, just for fun. The riddle was basically a string of 12 proper nouns that each contained three characters. These proper nouns were all names of *ci pai* [*ci* poem patterns] but they were specially selected because the first character of the name was a number. These names were listed in the order such that it looked like 1__, 2__, 3__, 4__, 5__, 6__, 7__, 8__, 9__, 10__, 100__, 1000__. (Of course, where I have put in numbers for illustration purposes is actually the Chinese character for that number, and __ is two Chinese characters.) The challenge was to create another string of 12 three-character proper nouns that followed a theme and the first character of the names also were these same numbers. Shi Yi was able to do so using medicinal herb names.

The translation is awkward because, to maintain the pattern of the riddle, I had to manipulate some of the names so that the number was the first word of the name, and some of those words have true English translations but I had to abandon them and do a more literal translation with the number in the name (e.g. "Five-Sided Fruit" is actually just starfruit).

Someone tell me again why I was crazy enough to choose this novel to translate. >_<

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

37 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 12.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 12.2

[July 29, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [31 Comments](#)



This blog has such wonderful readers. My little outburst of frustration with myself brought such unexpected but wonderful encouragement last post. Thank you, all.

Oh, geeky Zhousheng Chen. And, some interesting dynamics going on in this update...

Chapter 12.2 – To Have Ever Been Free From Worry? (2)

The seventh month of the lunar calendar was Ghost Month[\[1\]](#).

Because of the specialness of this month, the Zhou family had a nighttime curfew restricting people from entering and leaving the premises, so it was not appropriate for Zhousheng Chen to travel back and forth between Zhenjiang and Shanghai during the late night hours. Shi Yi, therefore, requested a month of vacation time and went to stay at the old manor house in Zhenjiang. Mei Lin's approval came not without sighing, as she teased Shi Yi that she might as well simply go and live the life of a rich, young mistress of the household and not

bother staying in Shanghai anymore. After all, the big city with its glitzy glamour, revelry, and people bedecked in extravagance was not suitable for her young scientist.

She laughed, not saying anything in response.

Although the last several weekends, she had gone back with him, eating and staying together, she still had the sense that her existence there was like air.

Perhaps their family truly placed much value on recognized statuses. Even Xiao Ren, who had a very good relationship with her, would only politely address her as “Miss Shi Yi” in the presence of other people. The only fortunate piece was, his mother had been out of the country during this period.

The mobile reception there was poor, so she could only go online at night or use the landline telephone to call her family and friends.

During the day, when she grew tired from reading or writing and Zhousheng Chen was not present, she would simply sit and stare blankly outside.

The books on the table were all very hard to come by.

They were all out of print books that were stored in the library tower’s collection, most written in traditional Chinese characters in vertical columns from top to bottom^[2], and some were even handwritten copies. She felt a slight aversion toward the library tower, so he would accompany her to select some books to bring back, and when she was finished, they would then go exchange them for others.

Roughly ten days later, some young people arrived at the manor, and then the atmosphere became somewhat more amiable.

That afternoon, Zhou Wenxing and Mei Xing were to arrive together. At the time, Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi were strolling leisurely down the stone steps of the mountain. Thick layers of green leaves blocked out a large portion of the sun’s rays, and there was water nearby and a breeze so it did not feel hot.

When she grew tired from walking, she would sit down.

There were very small fish inside the brook. Not many, but there happened to be a group gathered there at the bend in the stream.

Above the surface of the water, several dragonflies hovered back and forth.

She watched them, allowing her mind to empty as she sat on a large stone, viewing this as a time to rest. Zhousheng Chen was standing beside her, and after a brief moment of silence, he glanced at his watch. "Wenxing and Mei Xing should be here."

When he said "should be here," that meant they would definitely be making an appearance within two minutes.

People who had an acute sense of time and punctuality would naturally restrain others around them to this standard as well, including her, who had developed a habit of being punctual now.

Sure enough, they very soon saw a black sedan making its way up the winding mountain road, and before long, it came to a stop on the side of the road not far from them. The vehicle door opened and Mei Xing stepped out first from within, followed by Wenxing. The two of them passed under the towering trees and halted their steps on the other side of the brook. Tilting her head to the side, Wenxing called out with a giggle, "Eldest Sister-in-Law."

Shi Yi smiled, "He just said that you guys should be arriving and then you really did show up."

"My big brother is very strict when it comes to time." Wenxing pretended to heave a sigh. "Made the chauffeur all stressed out, too, so that he didn't dare be late."

Was this an accusation? Or pouting?

She felt, every time she saw Zhou Wenxing, she treated Shi Yi as if they were very familiar with one another. She was one of the few people in this family who was warm and kind to her. Shi Yi gave a brief nod in greeting to Mei Xing and then began laughingly chiming in with Zhou Wenxing to accuse Zhousheng Chen of having harsh, rigid views on time.

The accused, however, did not seem to mind in the least.

“The dragonflies, fireflies, and bugs are especially numerous here.” Seeing that Shi Yi was looking at some dragonflies, Wenxing bent her knees into a half-squat and reached out to try to pinch a dragonfly’s wings. “I used to come here a lot when I was young. I’d often catch these for fun.”

Her hands were very thin, which should be a result of having a congenital heart disease, and this caused her whole being to appear somewhat gaunt and fatigued.

Shi Yi had not noticed this the last time she had seen her. This time, her physical state and energy level were noticeably much worse.

“Hey, my little beauty, during Ghost Month, you can’t catch dragonflies,” Mei Xing warned her with a grin.

“Why?” Zhou Wenxing was perplexed.

Mei Xing chuckled quietly but did not continue to explain.

Zhou Wenxing bit down on her lip, and in an irate voice, she muttered, “You’re just picking on me for growing up outside the country and not knowing all your heretical beliefs.”

Hearing their banter, Shi Yi broke out in laughter. “It’s just a taboo thing among the common people. Commonly, it’s believed the dragonfly and katydid are actually the ghosts and spirits of the deceased. That’s why, during Ghost Month, it’s... best not to catch them and bring them home to avoid having some ‘good friends’ pay you a visit.”

One day, when she was still a child, she had been sweeping ancestral tombs and had been educated by a few aunties about this. Hence, she clearly remembered her lesson.

“Ah?” Zhou Wenxing immediately retracted her hand. “I normally come back here either during Qingming Festival to sweep tombs or during Ghost Month... And I usually catch a bunch and bring them back with me for fun...” With a trace of dread, she could not help pressing, “What’s a katydid?”

Before Shi Yi had a chance to answer, Mei Xing was already telling her, “It’s a

bush-cricket. I remember when you were a kid, you would always play around with them.”

Zhou Wenxing’s face became even paler.

Shi Yi was worried that they had truly frightened her so she assured her with a smile, “Don’t be scared. We’re just saying this for fun.”

Actually, she, too, was frightened of these sorts of folk legends, so she certainly could understand what the girl was feeling at this moment.

She was about to carry on consoling her, but Zhousheng Chen was already shaking his head as he gave a long sigh. “The katydid, also colloquially known as “deng ting” [“lamp fuel”] and “fu lao” [“to bear and toil”], is an insect belonging to the order Odonata and suborder Anisoptera. They are often found flying near water. After mating, the female will lay her eggs in habitats of vegetation near a source of water. They have no connection whatsoever to souls and spirits.”

This was the explanation of an atheist.

Purely scientific.

Mei Xing could not resist bantering with him. “Hey, great scientist, ‘that which is real is reasonable.’ [\[3\]](#) For me, I believe in Buddhism and reincarnation.”

Crouching down halfway as well, Zhousheng Chen very deftly pinched another dragonfly’s wings and with a flippant smile, he used facts to refute him. “At present, it is laying eggs. Afterwards, there will be larvae, the dragonfly nymphs, and eventually, they emerge from a final moult as a mature adult. And then, there is another round of breeding and reproduction. A very strict and complete process, don’t you agree?”

Mie Xing mocked him again with another couple of sentences. The two of them had known each other since childhood and were accustomed to this type of bandying of words.

To say Zhousheng Chen did not have his own faith was not completely correct. His faith should be in science.

As Shi Yi listened to their dialogue, she tapped the surface of the water with

her fingers. Icy-cold. Pleasant.

Had the “he” of hundreds and thousands of years past, as he lay drunken upon the battlefield, ever believed that one day, he would be standing in a dense, shady mountain forest conversing about a world that was made up of physics and chemistry? Or perhaps, what she remembered was merely a distorted illusion[4]?

*A fine grape wine, a jade cup that glows in the night[5],
As I ready to drink, the pipa[6] on horses calls out in summons.
Should I lay drunken on the battlefield, laugh not, I pray,
Since days of old, how many return from war?[7]*

Those poems and verses still endured, but the poet and the persons described in the poem were already a part of history.

Being the person that Zhousheng Chen was, with him present, that eerie, ghostly atmosphere from a moment ago was naturally broken, and Zhou Wenxing’s mind felt much more at ease. Nevertheless, although she was studying medicine, she ultimately had the mindset of a young girl, and combined with having grown up in this type of old, traditional family, she was still rather fearful about ghosts and supernatural things.

Before they left, Zhou Wenxing even gave a proper bow in the direction of the dragonflies and murmured something along the lines of “have been disrespectful to you elders, but please do not be mad.”

During Ghost Month, when the Zhou family had meals, a table would be left empty but on it would be placed the same dishes that were being served to everyone else.

Zhousheng Chen also needed to represent this generation of the family and fill every wine cup of that empty table as a symbolic offering of filial respect to elders that had passed on.

Shi Yi had not thought anything of it in the beginning, but after the scene from this afternoon, she found that he really was a paradox. It was not surprising that he had directly stated to her that he ultimately would not live his life within this family.

Owing to Mei Xing and Zhou Wenxing's arrival, their nighttime activities were finally a bit more lively.

Mei Xing was sitting and chatting with Zhou Wenxing and Shi Yi. Zhousheng Chen was also sitting with them, but his eyes were on his computer, browsing over material she could not understand at all. She sat close up against him, and Zhousheng Chen's hand naturally held her waist in a half-embrace as he continued to look over his own things.

She did not want to disturb him, so she simply took on the role of a listener and listened as the other two persons conversed.

Mei Xing was someone who had a knack for words, and at the same time, he knew very well how to frighten people. After a while, the topic switched and became all sorts of stories on ghosts and phantoms, and he even "thoughtfully" linked them to the old manor house's buildings.

"That library tower —" Several places had been mentioned already, and finally, he was bringing in the library tower as well.

"Stop, stop!" Zhou Wenxing had been resting herself against Shi Yi, and she immediately sat up now. "You can't talk about the library tower."

Finding this strange, Mei Xing asked, "Why not?"

"My sister-in-law really likes that place." Zhou Wenxing was earnest in her desire to prevent him from continuing. "If you talk about it, what will happen if she is scared to go there after that?"

Surprised by this, Mei Xing glanced over toward Shi Yi.

She mulled for a moment, then in a serious tone, agreed, "It's better not to talk about that place. I'm scared I really won't dare go there after."

"I've read quite a few of the books in there, too." Mei Xing lamented, "It would seem no one has been inside for a look in many years."

Shi Yi thought about this. Indeed. Even though, it was cleaned immaculately, it did not contain even the slightest feeling of life.

Zhou Wenxing sat crosslegged on the couch, and in passing, lifted up the teacup in front of her to take a sip. "Since you like classical literature, it would have been better if you had been born into our family. From what I can see, out of all the brothers and sisters in your family, there actually aren't many of you who like that sort of thing."

Mei Xing broke out in a laugh. His eyes were deep. "Yes, true, there aren't many."

"Early last month, the question that you sent out, was anyone able to solve it?"

"Question?"

Zhou Wenxing reminded him, "The one you sent to everyone in a group email. There was a string of *ci* poem pattern names. Afterwards, I asked you what did you mean to do with it, and you told me secretly that it would be a preliminary test question in the future for selecting a wife."

Hearing this, Shi Yi remembered the riddle she had answered for Zhousheng Chen.

She paused briefly in surprise and stole a glance at Zhousheng Chen from the corner of her eye.

Clearly, he had not heard the discussion and was still looking over the material he was holding.

Mei Xing coughed lightly. "That was a joke."

"No one had the answer?" Wenxing asked probingly.

"Um... there was someone." His fingers unconsciously hammered against the wooden armrest of his chair. "Your sister-in-law."

"Shi Yi?" Wenxing was astonished.

Shi Yi hurriedly explained, "I was just helping Zhousheng Chen arbitrarily answer that."

Tilting her head slightly to one side, Wenxing quietly said to Mei Xing ,
“Compared to my big brother, you don’t even come close. Don’t even think about having your eyes on my eldest sister-in-law.”

She was making a joke, but Mei Xing gave a cough and used his eyes to indicate to this little sister not to speak imprudently.

Shi Yi also felt somewhat awkward and shifted her body slightly.

“What’s the matter?” Zhousheng Chen detected her movements and finally moved his eyes away from the computer.

“I’ll go make you a cup of tea.”

“Let Lianhui go make it?” he suggested in a low voice.

“It’s fine. I’ll go.” She moved his arm away and personally went to make tea for them.

When the time was approaching nine o’clock, only the two of them remained.

It was still the same mode of spending time together they were accustomed to, with only occasional conversation during their rest period.

Shi Yi was still brooding over the dismissal he had shown during the day to the idea of deities and the supernatural. She was reading rather restlessly on the chaise lounge, her mind troubled. Possibly because she had turned over too many times, she attracted his attention.

Zhousheng Chen walked over, sat down on the edge of her chaise lounge, and with a hand supporting him on each side of the chair, he asked her softly,
“Something weighing on your mind?”

“No.” She blew out a breath. “Just thinking some senseless thoughts.”

“What are you thinking about?”

“I really believe in things like gods and Buddhism. Would you be unhappy about that?”

He smiled in sudden realization. “You asked me this question before. In May.”

Such a good memory. It would seem it had, indeed, been during her first visit

here, that time she had accompanied his mother to offer incense.

At the time, he had stood outside of the temple's main hall without any intention of entering, and then he had told her that he was wholly and completely an atheist.

She looked at him, pondered for a moment, and then switched the topic. "Such an unpleasant thing for you. Everyday, to have to pour wine for your... 'elders.'"

Zhousheng Chen let out a chuckle. With his finger, he gave her a little tap on her face. "No matter how you may persist in your own principles, you can never escape from those relationships that exist between people. Sometimes, conceding a small step for those around you is not considered unpleasant."

She gave an "mm" in reply, allowing him to gently caress her face with his hand.

"Besides, it is simply pouring wine." He lowered his head and moved closer to her. "Compared to pouring chemical reagents in the laboratory, this is much easier."

A little bit of self-mockery, a little bit of jesting.

[1] 鬼月 "gui yue." The seventh month of the lunar calendar is regarded as Ghost Month and the fifteenth day of that month is the Ghost Festival. Unlike Qingming Festival where living descendants go to pay respects to elders who have passed on, during the Ghost Festival, it is believed that the deceased return to the mortal world. The Ghost Festival also pays respects to all deceased family members, including those of the same or younger generation. In 2011, the year this story is taking place, the seventh month of the lunar calendar began on July 31 of the Gregorian calendar.

[2] 竖版繁体 "shu ban fan ti." Traditionally, Chinese characters were written in vertical columns read from top to bottom, right to left. 繁体 "fan ti" characters or "traditional" chinese characters are currently used in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan whereas Mainland China uses simplified characters. Simplified Chinese characters were created in the 1950s and 60s by decreasing

the number of strokes a large number of traditional characters as a way to increase literacy. Nowadays in Mainland China, printed books mainly use simplified characters that are read horizontally from left to right. Vertical columns of traditional characters are rare to be found being printed there.

[3]存在即合理 “cun zai ji he li.” This is a translation of a quote from German philosopher, Georg Hegel. The full English translation of the quote is “What is reasonable is real; that which is real is reasonable.” Or alternatively, “What is rational is actual, what is actual is rational.” Very simplistically, the idea is that what logically follows from reasoning is real.

[4]顛倒夢想 “dian dao meng xiang.” What I have translated as “distorted illusion” is actually a concept taken directly from the Buddhist Heart Sutra (心經). Simplistically, it is talking about wrong perceptions that you believe in but can end up trapping you..

[5]夜光杯 “ye guang bei.” Literally, “night glowing cup.” A cup produced of a fine jade that glimmers under the moonlight when filled with alcohol.

[6]琵琶. The pipa is a traditional Chinese instrument. In the scene depicted by the poem, it is being used as a battlefield instrument, and the poem is referring to a person mounted on a horse, using the pipa to summon the soldiers.



Pipa ([Image credit](#))

[7] This famous poem is called 涼州詞 “Liangzhou Verse” by Tang dynasty poet 王翰 Wang Han.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

38 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 12.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 12.3

[August 1, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [40 Comments](#)



The sweetness and languidness of the last several posts may have lulled you into forgetting that Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi's world is a little more complicated than most normal people's. Still some squeal-worthy moments in this update but there's also...

Chapter 12.3 – To Have Ever Been Free From Worry? (3)

Inside were warm-colored wall lamps while outside were lanterns. She was seated near the window and had, at first, been able to see a string of lanterns that were level with her eyes, but now, the man before her obstructed that scene from her view.

One day prior to and through to one day after the Ghost Festival, the lights of the Zhou household were to remain on during the night.

Three consecutive nights of complete illumination through the entire night.

This sort of place seemed as if it could block out time.

One was unable to distinguish which dynasty, which era one was in. Uncertain what was one's surname and given name.

“I want to give you a gift. What would you like?” His voice was somewhat deeper.

It was the effect of the lighting, or perhaps the effect of this late hour, for much of his strong scholarly air was concealed. The majority of his face was framed against the glow of the light behind him, and it gave her such a feeling of familiarity. In actual fact, besides those clear eyes, there were no other similarities.

“Why do you suddenly want to give me a gift?”

“I’m not too sure,” he smiled faintly.

“Not too sure?”

“What I mean is, I am not too sure the reason why.”

Shi Yi could not help laughing at this. In her light, resonant voice, she teased him, “You want to give me something but you don’t know the reason?”

“Perhaps it is because of instinct.”

“Instinct?”

He seemed to be choosing his words, and after a brief pause, he carried on, “Towards the woman he likes, a man’s... instinctive behavior.”

Shi Yi shifted herself slightly and softly replied, “Just give whatever you want to give.” Objects that had a physical existence were simply things of the world. They came not with you when you were born and they left not with you when you died. The importance to her was not what he would actually give her.

This one sentence he had spoken was already enough.

She was wearing a nightgown and the neckline was somewhat low so that even the slightest shift in her body would reveal a beautiful sight within. He was sitting on the edge of the seat, his body leaning inwards over that chaise lounge so that it was touching one side of her waist. In that brief moment of stillness, his eyes slid from her face to her bosom, then continued down until they reached the curve of her waist. Shi Yi felt lightheaded from his gaze, and amid that silence that made a person feel uptight and restless, she moved her fingers a tad. At first, she had only wanted to dispel that uncomfortable feeling of heat in her

body, but in the end, like her hands were being guided by something else, she reached, instead, to stroke his face.

She did not know whether he wanted to do it or just wanted to look.

She could not tell what he was thinking.

“I’ll give you jade as a gift. What are you used to wearing?” He finally raised his eyes to look at hers.

“Why jade?” But after thinking about it briefly, she understood. “That’s true. Your family is rather traditional.”

He gave a chuckle. His hand slipped into the neckline of her nightgown and slid down her back, his arm easing the gown down until more than half her body was uncovered. “Have you read *Shuowen Jiezi* [“Explaining Words and Analyzing Characters”][\[1\]](#) before?”

“I’ve read a bit, but I can’t really remember...”

The clasp of her bra was undone so that it now slipped down and hung from her arms.

He leaned forward until he was stretched out on top of her. “Jade is the beauty amongst all stones,” he quoted in a quiet voice. “Very appropriate, therefore, to give to you.”

Her bosom was pressed against his shirt, directly contacting its material and giving an unaccustomed chafing feeling. The space was rather tight on that couch for their two bodies. When she could bear it no longer and uttered a sound, they happened to hear Lianhui and Lianrong talking in the courtyard outside of their window. The two girls’ voices abruptly cut off, and in that same instant, he also sealed her lips with his own.

The two girls down below immediately could guess what was occurring upstairs.

All voices dispersed.

There were only the song of the cicadas, an urging rhythm, and the intimacy of two bodies brushing against one another.

“There is a beautiful girl who brings harmony to the house and with her

husband [**shi** you mei ren, **yi** jia **yi** shi].[\[2\]](#)” Beside her ear, he interpreted her name.

Shi Yi.

There is a beautiful girl who brings harmony to the house and with her husband.

Her name – this was what it represented to him.

The following morning, when Shi Yi awoke, Zhousheng Chen was already gone.

She sat alone in that small dining hall, leisurely eating her breakfast. Lianhui and Lianrong accompanied her, conducting themselves gingerly and carefully. During breakfast the previous few days, she had chatted casually with both of them, but because of last night... She was a little embarrassed and did not speak much to either. When she set down her spoon, Lianhui cleared the table and finally broke the awkwardness. “Today is the Ghost Festival. There will be water lanterns being released[\[3\]](#).”

“You release lanterns here?” She had never released water lanterns during the Ghost Festival before. She had only, once or twice, seen lanterns that were lit on land during the Lantern Festival[\[4\]](#).

“Yes,” Lianrong laughed. “Every year.”

Humans were yang, ghosts were yin. The land was yang while water was yin[\[5\]](#).

Lanterns on both water and land were a picturesque scenery. Unfortunately, in the over-bustling metropolis that Shanghai was, these customs no longer existed. She remembered, during every year’s Ghost Festival, at most, the recordings for the day would finish earlier and everyone would utter routine lines such as, “It’s Ghost Festival. Hurry home earlier. Don’t run around outside for no reason.” That would be it.

“Second Young Master and Second Young Madam arrived earlier on.” Lianhui remembered something. “Second Young Madam is with child and will not go to release lanterns.”

Lanterns that were released to light the way back to the underworld.

It was taboo for a pregnant woman to participate, to avoid negatively affecting the unborn child.

Shi Yi suddenly thought of the woman who had so unexpectedly lost her life the last time she was here and felt rather uncomfortable. But, it seemed as if everyone was rather indifferent about these sorts of things, including even Lianghui and Liangrong, who, when they spoke about Tong Jiaren's pregnancy, only used a completely narrative tone that utterly lacked any joy. She had, at first, wanted to ask a couple more questions, but in the end simply gave an "mm" in acknowledgement.

She remembered Zhousheng Chen's words:

In this manor, there were a total of 68 courtyard wings and 1118 rooms. There were many people, and the types of people were varied as well.

And so, it was best to ask little and speak little.

Surprisingly, he did not return that evening and also left her to have dinner alone in that little courtyard wing.

She knew that his mother had arrived together with Zhou Wenchuan and his wife, and it was likely out of worry that his mother would make things difficult for her that he made such an arrangement. Luckily, there was still Zhou Wenxing, who always seemed to turn up at just the right time to help settle her heart. She arrived after Shi Yi had finished her dinner specifically to go release floating water lanterns with her.

"My mom won't be going tonight to float the lanterns," Zhou Wenxing smiled, exposing her canine tooth. "You don't need to be nervous."

With an "mm," Shi Yi inquired, "Is she not feeling well?"

"Maybe. Not too sure. She still looked okay at dinner." Zhou Wenxing thought for a moment. "Maybe she just doesn't want to go."

While the two were still speaking, they had already set the lanterns in their hands onto the water.

A breeze was blowing over the surface of the water, and the flame of the

floating lotus-shaped lanterns flickered, shadows fluttering one over another.

People of the Zhou family, young and old, stood all along the riverbank. Three to five of them would gather together in casual conversation.



Lotus water lanterns ([image credit](#))

Originally, she had not wanted to take a boat but Wenxing had been insistent, so she did not say any more.

Wenxing sat along the edge of the boat, and as she became excited about what she was discussing, she could not contain her low chuckle. “One year during Ghost Month, I went to Singapore. There was an open-air concert. The big star celebrities were up on stage singing, but there were some seats that were empty... I ran up really happily and sat down there...” She laughed as she told her story and then was unable to hold back her coughing. “Later, when my classmate pulled me out of my seat, I learned that those seats were reserved for the ghosts to sit...”

She looked happy, but for some reason, her coughing was becoming more and more fierce.

Shi Yi patted her lightly on her back. “The wind is strong. Should we go back to shore?”

“Mm, sure.” Wenxing’s face was a little pale as she breathed rather laboriously, gently pressing her hand against her own chest.

Shi Yi touched her hand to Wenxing’s wrist.

The pulse was rapid and also very weak.

She was not knowledgeable and only sensed that this was very bad. And seeing

Wenxing's complexion confirmed this thought.

"Pardon me for troubling you. Let's go back to shore." Shi Yi turned around to look at the person propelling the boat with a pole.

Very quickly, the person responded and began turning the boat around in the direction they had come.

"Sister-in-Law, I'm really dizzy sitting here." Wenxing's voice was unsteady.

Hurriedly, Shi Yi stretched out her hand to help her move towards the inside of the boat to sit, but the boat suddenly pitched several times. Losing her footing, she fell forcefully to one side. In that instant when she was thrown off balance, she only had time to let go of Wenxing before she abruptly plunged into the river.

Completely submersed into an icy cold. And darkness.

She did not know how to swim and swallowed several mouthfuls of water, already drowning.

This moment seemed as if it was several hours long. All the lights were up on the surface of the water. Water invaded her from every possible direction. And the feelings of sinking and darkness. Before she lost her awareness, she could only force herself with all her might to hold her breath...

Until, her consciousness gradually slipped away...

.....

There was no longer any water around her. She was half-crouching as she leaned against the side of the bamboo chair, truly feeling the touch of the arms of the chair against her.

Every edge, every segment. So distinct.

The person before her was resting in the bamboo chair of the study. Sunlight shone through the windows, and mottled shadows fell on him. In that mix of half light, half darkness, his eyes were clear like water as he raised his head.

And he was looking at her.

In those eyes was her own clear reflection.

She wanted to reach out her hand to touch his face, but mid-motion, she stopped, not daring to get any closer...

“Shi Yi?”

That ancient picture quickly dissolved away.

Her head pounded excruciatingly, and her stomach hurt terribly.

From the scene of brilliant sunshine to the darkness she was now in, she struggled back to consciousness. In her hazy vision, she could make out Zhousheng Chen.

The front of his shirt was wet, and he was completely kneeling before her, both hands pressed against the ground as he called her name: “Shi Yi.”

“Mm...” With all her might, she tried to answer him.

“It’s good that you’re awake now.” His voice sounded a bit tight, and it was also raspy. “Don’t talk.”

She was very obedient and once more closed her eyes.

Soon, her awareness grew dim again. It seemed like someone was administering oxygen to her.

Somebody was speaking, something like “acute hypoxia-ischemia” or along those lines. She wanted to hear more clearly, but it was already very difficult. She only knew that he was beside her. That brief illusion a moment ago was too wonderful and had been so real it was frightening. In those memories of her past life she had had during her childhood, she had always been a spectator. Only this time had she personally experienced and taken part in the scene... had her heart taken part in the scene.

It was to the point that, even before she slipped off into unconsciousness, she somewhat wishfully thought, could she have another of those illusions?

Even if it was only for one time.

When she gained consciousness again, it was already day.

She opened her eyes. Her vision was blurry for a while before clarity gradually returned. Judging from the sunlight, it should be approaching noon.

“You’re awake?” Zhousheng Chen’s voice asked her.

She tugged the corner of her lips upward and in a tired voice, gave an “mm.” Turning her head as she sought out his voice, she saw him seated near the edge and leaning backwards in bed. He was still wearing the same light blue button-up shirt that he had put on the night before, and his dark eyes quietly looked down at her.

His voice low, he told her, “Last night, it was Wenxing who pulled you out and saved you. She is still sleeping. I need to leave for a short while and will be back in ten minutes.”

Wenxing?

Such poor health, yet she had still jumped into such frigid waters to rescue her?

Shi Yi’s brows pulled together in a frown, and her heart suddenly started beating a little more rapidly. “How is she doing?...”

“Her swimming abilities are strong, but she fell ill from the cold,” Zhousheng Chen answered. “You are probably slightly more severe and will have to do some follow-up treatments.”

“Her health isn’t very good...” She did not continue with her words because she knew Zhousheng Chen was merely trying to comfort her. The state of Wenxing’s health was not optimistic. “You go ahead. I feel much better.”

Very quickly, Zhousheng Chen called for someone but it was not Lianhui and rather, was an unfamiliar girl.

In a very serious tone of voice, he quietly gave some instructions. After the girl nodded her head silently, indicating that she would remember all he had told her, he left the room. Shi Yi also used this time to close her eyes again and rest for a while.

The next time she heard the sound of the door, it was Zhou Wenxing and Zhousheng Chen coming in together.

Wenxing told Zhousheng Chen that she would keep Eldest Sister-in-Law company and assured him that he could go. Waiting until, in the room, there was only Shi Yi, herself, and the young girl attending to them off to the side, Wenxing took a seat at the edge of the bed and said softly, “ Sister-in-Law, you scared me to death. Last night really scared me to death...” She had lightly applied some make-up, which was a rarely seen occurrence, but her complexion still looked pale and unhealthy.

“I’m sorry.” She reached to take Wenxing’s hand, forgetting the intravenous needle that still remained on the back of her own until she felt a sharp pain and had no choice but to pull her hand back. “I should have been a little more careful. I ended up causing you to jump in to save me.”

“Good thing I’m a good swimmer.” Zhou Wenxing’s eyes suddenly grew red. “When we got ashore, your heart had stopped...”

She was somewhat shocked by this. She had not expected that the situation had been so grave.

“We were all terribly afraid. Big Brother’s face was white. When they were resuscitating you, he didn’t say anything at all, and all he knew to do was to keep calling your name beside you..... It’s all my fault. I had to insist on taking some boat...”

[1] 说文解字”Shuo Wen Jie Zi.” This title literally is “Explaining and Analyzing Written Characters.” The oldest Chinese dictionary, dating back to the Han dynasty, but its focus is not really to provide meanings and pronunciations but rather, to describe the etymologies of the characters, breaking them apart to explain how they came about or the rationale behind why they are written as such.

[2] 时有美人，宜家宜室 “shi you mei ren, yi jia yi shi.” The characters for Shi Yi’s name, 时宜 are embedded in this line, and hence, this poetic line is Zhousheng Chen’s interpretation of what Shi Yi’s name should mean and who she is to him. The last four characters are actually an idiom derived from a classical poem and compliments a woman’s virtues.

[3] The traditional belief is that during the 7th month of the lunar calendar,

Ghost Month, the spirits of the deceased return to the land of the living. During Ghost Festival, the 15th day of Ghost Month, the custom was to float lanterns, usually shaped like a lotus, on the river that would serve as guiding lights to lead the ghosts back to the underworld.

[4] 上元灯节 “shang yuan deng jie.” This literally means “lantern festival during the first period. “ It takes place on the 15th day of the first month in the Lunar year, and marks the end of the Spring Festival (a.k.a Chinese New Year’s festival) with the first full moon of the year. Traditionally, lanterns are lit and put up as decoration or carried around during the night. This festival has dates back ~2000 years ago, and has had various names throughout history. You may be more familiar with the name, 元宵节 Yuan Xiao Festival.



Lanterns lit up in Shanghai’s Yu Garden in preparation for Lantern Festival ([image credit](#))

[5] I suspect most of you are familiar with the concept of yin and yang already. Very simplistically, yin and yang represent two halves that actually form a whole. This is illustrated in the Chinese characters themselves, which refers to the natural phenoma of the sun. 阴 yin is actually referring to the lack of sunlight during night while 阳 yang is the sunlight during the day.

Additional Comments:

That one line that provides Zhousheng Chen’s interpretation of Shi Yi’s name is, first of all, an amazing line in the novel, and I just cannot capture it. It’s poetic and concise, and coming from Zhousheng Chen, is a sweet compliment. While in

modern times, to say that a woman “brings harmony to the house and her husband” would not be a common compliment anymore, it is very appropriate for Shi Yi, who has more traditional values (no revealing clothing, etc) and gives off an almost ancient feel.

Like Eleven of the past, Zhousheng Chen has not really experienced familial love besides with his sister, and Shi Yi not only brings love to him in their relationship but also together with her, they create a family. With Shi Yi, his family is complete, and he, as a husband feels harmonious – he belongs.

Also, the first four characters, 时有美人 means “there is a beautiful woman” or more accurately, “the times have a beautiful woman. Remember the line “All my life, I longed to be kept carefully by someone...” that was quoted in chapter 11.3 at the *pingtan* theatre? The title of the book from which this line is taken is 时有女人 “The Times Have a Woman/Women. Think it’s a coincidence that what Zhousheng Chen said differs from the book’s title by only one character? Do you think the author might deliberately be tying this back to Shi Yi’s expression of love, that she would love him by “keeping him from weariness, keeping him from suffering... keeping him from being alone”? That by “keeping” him, Shi Yi made him feel harmonious, to feel that he belonged.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

39 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 13.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 13.1

[August 5, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [50 Comments](#)



So calm on the surface... But is it truly?

Chapter 13.1 – Mysteries that Could Not Be Unraveled (1)

Zhou Wenxing quaveringly spoke only a couple more sentences and then broke down into sobs.

Very sorrowful sobs.

Genuinely alarmed by this, Shi Yi tried to console her, “I’m fine now. Honest, Wenxing.”

“I’m scared to death just thinking back on it now,” Zhou Wenxing choked out in a nasal-sounding voice. “So scared after the fact. If you had really, just like that... Big Brother would hate me for sure.”

She comforted Wenxing, “He wouldn’t. He loves you very much. And it was just an accident.”

Every time Zhousheng Chen spoke of this younger sister, he would have a

gentle expression on his face. She knew that he must like Wenxing very much and also felt the same about Xiao Ren. In this old manor, the three of them were a rare source of comforting warmth.

Wenxing only spoke for a short while before a look of fatigue overcame her, even as she still, again and again, apologized in a voice filled with guilt.

She ended up being the one to console Wenxing and, after all sorts of persuasion, finally convince her to return to her room and rest. The girl Zhousheng Chen had left to attend to her very adeptly changed her intravenous solution bag and then gave her a friendly smile.

“Thank you.”

The girl continued to smile. “Young Madam, don’t worry. Eldest Young Master will be back soon.”

She was taken aback for a moment and then smiled.

When it was lunchtime, he still had not returned.

Originally, the young girl had wanted to help Shi Yi with her food, but she declined with a smile. Instead, she asked for a tray table to be set on the bed, and slowly, she fed herself. She was not hungry, though, and in fact, when she ate, her stomach would hurt somewhat. The girl comforted her that dizziness and stomach pain were normal symptoms after near-drowning. After all, her brain had suffered from lack of oxygen for a period of time and she had also swallowed water, so these were inevitable.

Now, the main things were neurological nutrition and protective treatment for the lungs.

She recalled that Wenxing had said her heart had stopped, and feeling some retrospective fear, she did not ask further.

With head lowered, she ate her food. She felt that everyone’s reactions were exceptionally cautious, as if... this was not an accident.

The door was pushed open.

Zhousheng Chen strode in and cast his gaze first in the direction of the person on the bed.

Her white, two-piece pajamas made her look very frail. He waved his hand to dismiss the young girl. At the same time, Shi Yi detected his presence and raised her head to look at him. “You’re back? Have you eaten?”

“I have.” He sat down beside her and asked, “May I feed you?”

Blinking at this, Shi Yi smiled, “Alright.”

After she had just awoken, he had left. Undeniably, she had felt a sense of disappointment about that.

But now, as she thought about it, he had not even changed his shirt. He must have stayed right at her side and watched over her the whole night, and only when she regained consciousness did he finally take the time to go see his own younger sister.

“Last night, [maternal] Grandmother’s state of health was not very good.” He took the soup spoon from her hand, scooped up a spoonful of rice porridge, and brought it to her mouth. “Everything seemed to happen all together.”

Astounded, she asked, “What about now? Is she better yet?”

“Much better. I went to see her earlier on, and she even told me funny stories from the past.”

She breathed out in relief. However, she remembered Wenxing and was about to speak, but then hesitated.

“What would you like to ask?” He gazed at her with a slight smile.

“Is Wenxing’s health...”

“Yes. That is why it was arranged for her to come back, so she could rest and regain her health.”

“Then, last night...”

“Last night, she was in a slightly better state than you, but her health cannot be considered in an optimistic state either.”

“And you still brought her here to see me?”

“She insisted.” Zhousheng Chen was suddenly short of words. “I could not stop her.”

He fed another spoonful to her, and Shi Yi very cooperatively opened up and brought the food into her mouth.

She could perceive that his mood was rather low today, so she did not say much. Zhousheng Chen set down the bowl of rice porridge and the spoon, felt in the pocket of his trousers, and pulled out a small box. Opening it, he lifted out a pendant. A deep red string was tied in a pipa knot^[1], and below the knot, there hung a white, lustrous jade “safety and peace pendant^[2].”

“A ‘safety and peace pendant’?” Her lips turned up in a smile.

“Yes, a ‘safety and peace pendant.’” His voice sounded tired with a slight smooth, soft tone to it.

“Help me put it on.” Shi Yi pointed at her own neck and, in a slightly pouty but charming tone, said, “It will need to keep me safe.”

That was also the reason why he had chosen it.



White jade ‘safety and peace pendant,’
left ([image credit](#)) and pipa knot, right
([image credit](#))

He pulled out the pendant, loosened the knot for her, and reached from behind to place it on the front of her chest before pulling the string to the back. “Last night, how did you fall into the water?”

“Last night?” She stroked the gift he had given her as she carefully thought this over. “The boat was turning around, and it was a little rocky. At the time, Wenxing was sitting on the edge of the boat and said she was dizzy. I went to help her but lost my footing and fell into the water.”

“Lost your footing?”

“Mm-hmm. Maybe I wasn’t standing in a very good place and it was unsteady

beneath my feet, so I ended up falling over.”

It had happened in an instant, and it had all been too sudden. She really did not think there was anything unusual about it.

The knot was retied again.

From behind, he took her into his arms, allowing her to rest against him in his embrace. “I’m tired. I want to sleep for a short while.”

“Take off your jacket then and lie down here.” She let her hand cover the back of his, feeling warm and comfortable.

“I will just lean back like this,” he told her in a soft voice. “I won’t be sleeping for a long time. Just holding you like this and closing my eyes to rest for a little while will be sufficient.”

As he said this, he had already removed his glasses and set them down beside his hand.

Adjusting his position once more so he was holding her a little more comfortably, he truly did not speak again and slowly drifted off to sleep.

She was afraid she would wake him and did not dare make any movements.

Shi Yi sat there like this until her entire body was stiff, and still she did not dare move. She could only pout her lips and amusedly mutter in her mind, “My most beloved scientist, is this how you keep a sick person company?...”

He had been concerned she might be hot and had turned on the air conditioning in the room, but, perhaps because he had also been worried she might find the air stuffy, the window had been opened too. The room temperature was very comfortable. That feeling a moment ago of wanting to move but not daring to gradually faded, and instead, she thought of Wenxing’s words.

She remembered, during her brief moment of consciousness on the river’s shore, he had been kneeling beside her, eyes fixed on her.

And Wenxing had said his face had been pale and he had refused to say anything aside from calling her name. That was likely the position he had been in as he leaned in close to her and, in a soft voice that called out over and over

again, pulled her out from the illusion.

From the sun-filled study to the riverbank illuminated brightly by lights. From the past to the present.

As she thought about this, she felt very happy and blessed.

She wanted to laugh.

After a while, she really did begin to giggle. Quietly, she picked up his hand, bent her head down, and kissed it before gently lowering it back to where it had been.

Zhousheng Chen did not awaken until the girl came to remove the needle from her hand.

Shi Yi asked him whether she could accompany him to visit his maternal grandmother. Zhousheng Chen seemed hesitant, so Shi Yi immediately added that Grandmother really liked her, and if she went, the elderly lady would surely be happier. Plus, with him by her side, there should be no problems. In the end, he agreed and instructed Uncle Lin to ready the vehicle.

By chance, when they arrived, they ran into Zhou Wenchuan and Tong Jiaren.

The two were keeping Grandmother company and chatting with her. When Shi Yi stepped in, she nodded slightly to them as greeting. She could not seem to approach the interactions with this younger brother and sister-in-law in a positive manner and would actually silently pray that she would see them as little as possible, but there was not much that could be done when they bumped into them like this.

“I don’t know whether I will be around long enough to witness his birth.” The elderly lady gently rubbed Tong Jiaren’s abdomen with her hand and smiled faintly. As she spoke, her other hand was still continually turning her circle of prayer beads.

“Why would you not see him?” Tong Jiaren gave a soft laugh and said, “We’re still waiting for you to choose a pet name[\[3\]](#) for him.”

“Oh yes.” Grandmother’s seemed to be in a very good mood. “I was also the

one who chose your name. And now, in a blink, you're grown-up like this."

The two women carried on in their conversation.

Grandmother particularly loved Tong Jiaren and Zhousheng Chen.

Simply from listening to their discussion, one could deduce that Tong Jiaren had truly grown up together with Zhousheng Chen. It seemed, back then, the elderly woman had taken care of the two for a long time. The phrase "green plums and bamboo horse[4]" was describing this type of relationship, right?

Shi Yi sat in a chair beside the bed. Not far from her was Zhou Wenchuan.

The two of them, who for the time being were being left out, were both silent.

The difference was, Shi Yi was watching the elderly woman, and when Grandmother glanced over at her, she would smile in return to let her know that she was there the whole time, keeping her company. Zhou Wenchuan, however, looked only at Tong Jiaren. It seemed he cared very much about this wife of his.

"Mother has been wanting to come visit you." Tong Jiaren suddenly brought up Zhousheng Chen's mother.

The elderly woman gave a dull "mm."

She provided no other response, and the topic was very effortlessly changed.

"You two brothers do not get to see each other very often." Grandmother turned to look over at Zhou Wenchuan. "Why are you not saying anything to one another, then, with this rare opportunity?"

Zhou Wenchuan answered with a laugh, "I'll let your granddaughter-in-law spend more time with you. We're just listeners on the side. People to sit with you."

Zhousheng Chen was also smiling and said, "Today, we are primarily here to see you. If we want to talk, there will be many opportunities."

The two brothers were seemingly on the same page.

But, it was merely "seemingly."

Shi Yi thought, even she, as the last person to join this household, could tell

that this was the case. The elderly woman could certainly see this as well.

Sure enough, Grandmother sighed lightly and said to them in a slow voice, “A gentleman guards against three things. In youth, before his pulse has settled, he guards against lust. In his prime when his pulse is strong and full of vigor, he guards against contentiousness. In old age when his pulse is deteriorating, he guards against greed.[\[5\]](#)”

Puzzled, Shi Yi glanced at Zhousheng Chen.

Zhousheng Chen seemed able to guess what the elderly woman wanted to say, and he smiled slightly.

“The two of you are in the prime of your age. You must avoid, by all means, falling into strife over what are merely worldly possessions...” Grandmother quickly laid bare her implied meaning. “To be brothers is a special type of fated affinity.”

Zhou Wenchuan shook his head in amusement. “Oh, you. You’re simply overthinking things.”

Tong Jiaren also gently patted the elderly lady’s hand. “Grandmother, they won’t. They’re brothers. If there really is something dividing them, there’s still me.”

The elderly woman put on a half-smile and continued to grasp her 108 prayer beads with her fingers.

Sincere and devout.

Perhaps every elderly person who worshipped Buddha was like this.

As they chanted the sutras and prayed, they could, at any time, forget about the people beside them, who had been accompanying and conversing with them.

By the time the four of them left the little home, it was approaching dinnertime. Tong Jiaren glanced at the two brothers and suddenly suggested that they all go out together for dinner. It could be considered a chance to catch up after not seeing one another for a long period.

“Let’s go.” Shi Yi quietly expressed her thoughts when Zhousheng Chen looked over silently toward her for her opinion.

They were not far from the restaurant that the Zhou family used to host guests, so they simply went there.

The four of them sat together at a table by the window.

Outside the window was a lotus pond. The lotus flowers in the water had not yet withered away, but neither were they flourishing beautifully like they had during the height of summer.

“I heard Mother mention that the last time Miss Shi Yi, you were here, you made a painting?” Tong Jiaren personally lifted up the teapot and filled her cup for her. “A piece that could cause even Uncle Chen to praise it nonstop is one I would really like to see.”

She smiled and replied modestly, “I only know how to paint some lotus flowers. After painting lots of them, I’ve become well-practiced.”

Tong Jiaren smiled wordlessly as she set down the teapot.

Right then, someone brought out two tureens of soup and placed one by Tong Jiaren’s hand and the other by Shi Yi’s.



A “zhong” — a
Chinese tureen
([image credit](#))

The four of them found this rather strange. They had not given orders on what should be made yet. Why were soups being served?

“Madam instructed us to do so,” the household manager who had served the broths immediately explained. “One is for Second Young Madam and is nourishing for pregnancy, and one is for Miss Shi Yi and is beneficial for helping

the body to recover.”

She was rather delightfully surprised. This was too unexpected.

“Alright,” Tong Jiaren said to him and quickly lifted the lid on hers and took a sniff. “Mm... I reckon it won’t taste all that good.”

With a chuckle, Zhou Wenchuan shook his head. “It’s up to you whether you want to drink it.”

Shi Yi also uncovered her own soup. The concentrated broth had the faint aroma of Chinese herbal medicine.

Picking up her spoon, she stirred the broth slightly and then scooped up a spoonful.

She was about to take a sip when Zhousheng Chen’s hand reached over and gipped hers. “You are taking western medicines right now. It would not be very fitting to drink a broth that contains traditional Chinese medicines.”

He had not spoken loudly, and even though he had stopped her so suddenly, his words were reasonable.

But... Shi Yi contemplated briefly, then still quietly expressed her own desire. “I’ll just take a sip or two. When your mom hears about it, she will be happy.” Zhousheng Chen was still hesitant about something, and his emotions could not be read.

She had already lowered her head and taken a small sip. She grimaced.

“What’s wrong?” he quickly asked, with brows also creased together.

“Bitter —” Shi Yi stuck out her tongue and grinned.

Zhousheng Chen was speechless for a moment, and then he let out a chuckle. “In a moment, tell them to make something sweet for you to eat.”

“Mm.”

[1] 琵琶绳结 “pipa sheng jie.” A Chinese knot based on the figure eight shape. It is narrow on top and rounds out on the bottom, like a pear shape or like the

traditional Chinese instrument, the pipa (see footnote [6], chapter 12.2).

[2] 平安扣 “ping an kou.” Literally “safety and peace pendant.” This is a traditional Chinese jade accessory. It has a round, smooth donut shape and was believed that wearing it was good for the body and protected it. In China nowadays, it is still widely seen, and when gifted, it also represents a blessing of safety and peace.

[3] 小名 “xiao ming.” Literally means “little name.” Also called 乳名 “ru ming” or “milk name.” When a baby is born, he or she can be given a “little name”, like a familiar name or childhood pet name, before an official/formal name is chosen.

[4] 青梅竹马 “qing mei zhu ma.” 青梅 “qing mei” means “green plums” and refers to a young girl who is playing with a branch of green plums. 竹马 “zhu ma” means “bamboo horse” and is referring to a young boy who is riding his bamboo stick horse and coming to play with the young girl. This idiom, “green plums and bamboo horse” is used to describe a boy and a girl who had a friendship since childhood. Often, but not necessarily, it is referring to childhood friendships that have blossomed into romances.

[5] This entire passage spoken by Grandmother is quoted from《论语·季氏》”Confucian Analects, Book XVI.”

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
40 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 13.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 13.2

[August 8, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [51 Comments](#)



One of my favourite chapters. Beautiful imagery, poignant lines, thought-invoking words. (Hence, I'm sure you can guess that I have some "additional comments.")

Chapter 13.2 – Mysteries that Could Not Be Unraveled (2)

Since her fall overboard into the water, Zhousheng Chen was even more cautious regarding the people he arranged to be with her.

If she wanted to walk about in the old manor, the young girl and Uncle Lin would accompany her. Sometimes, Shi Yi would find it troublesome and would be even more content to stay in her own room, thinking, once Ghost Month was over, things would be fine.

After all, in Shanghai, she still had her own circle of friends, but here, aside from Wenxing, she truly did not have anyone she could really talk to. Then again, this also was a quiet place for her to focus and write her book.

There were times where she would write several thousand words in one day. She would then pick the passages that she felt were good and copy them again onto the actual paper she was using.

Each word, each sentence was carefully chosen.

Zhousheng Chen's mother's manner towards her was truly starting to change slowly.

At times, she would even invite her to have tea with her.

She was afraid Zhousheng Chen would worry, so she would only go when he could accompany her. Fortunately, she had the excuse that her "health was not very good." Otherwise, if her own parents ever found out, they would reprimand her for being disrespectful to an elder.

His mother would always prepare highly nutritious foods or herbal medicines specifically for her alone to eat and would tell her to consume them there before her.

This practice was very odd and was the same as Zhousheng Chen's, where, if she needed to eat or use something, he needed to personally watch before he could set his mind at ease.

"I heard Wenxing mention that you have read many ancient and classic books?" his mother asked her after waiting for her to set down her spoon.

"I have read some," she smiled. "I find the writing in classical texts very beautiful."

"Which ones do you tend to like most?"

"A wide variety. Hmm... I have probably read anything that has been published and is available on the market. And also some books from private collections."

She did not enjoy having overly complicated interpersonal relationships, and as a result, in the twenty-odd years of this life, most of her time had been spent in

reading about the rise and fall of dynasties and the poetry and songs that had followed after that lifetime.

“I am very fond of girls who read.” With a slight smile, his mother looked at her.

In all this time, this was the first form of approval his mother had given her. She smiled.

“However... I still maintain my stance: you are not suitable for this family of ours.” His mother’s eyes were fixed on her as she continued, “You have a very good family. It is not one of distinguished or influential personages but still is an erudite family. Your mother and father have a harmonious relationship. You do not have any brothers or sisters. The social circle of your adulthood is not complicated. You have fixed routines, fixed activities – a very regular lifestyle – and a career that very much suits your wishes. Correct?”

She pondered this briefly. “Yes. I spend weekends with my parents. On workdays, the morning is spent reading while the afternoon through to midnight or so is spent in the recording studio, where I only need to face the script and the recording engineer.”

Zhousheng Chen’s eyes flicked over toward her.

He seemed as if he wanted to prevent his mother’s questioning, but for some reason, he abandoned the idea.

“Besides your relationships with your classmates, other voice actors, your supervisors, and your neighbours and friends, your social circle has never expanded, yes?”

“Yes.” Her reply was given in a serious manner. “I like to use my time for professional voice acting or reading. For the remaining time, most of it is spent with my parents. Therefore, simple types of relationships are very suitable for me.”

Zhousheng Chen’s mother smiled slightly, “You have organized and arranged your life very well, and it is very stable. Why don’t you return to that once more and continue with your life?”

Shi Yi was taken aback momentarily. She wanted to say something but was stopped.

“Miss Shi Yi, listen to what I have to say.” The bearing she carried in her very expressions was certainly not something that came about overnight. “Let me give you an example. Ten years ago, a ship left a certain coastal port. Its passengers all were involved primarily in underground businesses, which diverge into all sorts of matters including politics, mineral resources, land, gems and jewelry, drugs, and arms trade.”

She remembered, similar words had once been spoken by Zhousheng Chen.

It had been in regards to the death of Xiao Ren’s birth mother.

“And the owner of this ship was the Zhou family.” His mother tugged her shawl slightly tighter. She seemed to be pulling up the memories. “That time, nineteen people died aboard the ship, one of whom belonged to the Zhou family – that was Xiao Ren’s mother – while the remaining were all outsiders. The funds and resources that circulated through the casino totaled up to several billion in U.S. dollars. And we, on our own ship, seized the opportunity to enter Iran’s automobile market as an authorized agent. At the same time, we also seized the rights to the only independent tellurium deposit in the world.”

His mother paused slightly, instructing someone to bring a new tea.

It was Bright Moon in the Jade-Colored Mountain Stream Tea[\[1\]](#).

“When you listen to this, does it sound like those movies that you provide the dubbing for?” His mother motioned for her to drink her tea.

Shi Yi gave a slight nod of her head.

Such a concrete example that very easily illustrated the lifestyle in the Zhou family. All that she had once surmised was now confirmed. This was a completely different family that lived “underground” and possessed its own empire.

Indeed, it did sound more like a story.

It was so far-removed from real life that when she heard this, it only seemed like a thing of tales.

“Your ability to accept and adapt is very good. At least, during last time’s incident, your response was very respectably appropriate.” Zhousheng Chen’s mother sighed lightly, and her voice grew gentler. “But, you have not been able to become accustomed to the Zhou family’s lifestyle, correct?”

Shi Yi simply gave an “mm.”

Unable to become accustomed to it and unable to agree with it.

His mother smiled indifferently, not speaking any further.

To merely touch on what needed to be said, and then to leave it at that. She had already said all that she wanted to say. The politics, the current balance of power, and the various social relationships aside, if this girl had seen the corpse of Zhousheng Ren’s mother at the time, it would have caused her to completely breakdown.

And that was not even mentioning all those family rules and underground exchanges that functioned outside of the law or conventional codes of human conduct.

Shi Yi looked over at Zhousheng Chen, holding a teacup in his hand and wearing a black shirt, white trousers, and black, metal frame glasses. When he drank his tea, when he spoke, when he did anything, there really was nothing special. Just like when she had stood outside the research institute in Xi’an and watched him, wearing his white laboratory coat, stride toward her.

Stern, meticulous, and low key, be it in his lifestyle or his work.

She had once asked him why he had devoted himself to research. His answer had been, so that he could do something that could be beneficial to even more people.

She very clearly remembered these words of his. Every sentence he had spoken to her, she very clearly remembered.

And hence, she was very resolute.

She was capable of staying by his side, to be with him as he did the things he truly wanted to do.

Zhousheng Chen had not participated in the entire discussion between Shi Yi and his mother.

At times, when he was tired, he would merely prop his elbow on the arm of the chair, remove his glasses, and lightly massage the bridge of his nose and the center point between his brows, or occasionally, he would look over at Shi Yi. After his mother had finished saying what she wanted to say, the topic quickly turned back to literature and poetry. When Wenxing arrived with Tong Jiaren and heard their conversation, they also joined in with great interest. This time, it was not only Tong Jiaren. Even Wenxing brought up the painting Shi Yi had once made and the praise that uncle had given her.

“Elder Chen is my old friend.” His mother was smiling as she recalled, “A very haughty and aloof person. Very rarely will he praise anyone.”

“Sister-in — ...” Wenxing managed to cut herself off in time. “Miss Shi Yi, I honestly really want to see that painting of yours. Too bad it was given to Uncle Chen.”

Tong Jiaren let out a little laugh. “Why don’t you paint another one today so it can be kept here in the Zhou manor?”

“Oh, yes.” Wenxing beamed at Shi Yi. “Is that okay, Shi Yi?”

She did not really mind.

Just as she was about to agree to it, Zhousheng Chen suddenly spoke up. “Painting consumes a great deal of strength and energy. Her body still has not recovered yet.”

“That’s true.” Wenxing was somewhat disappointed.

“But,” he said in a steady voice as he offered another suggestion, “I can try to recreate it.”

His voice was level, as if this was a very simple task.

Everyone was rather surprised. After all, the painting had been put away immediately after it was completed. Even if he had seen it before, it had only been that sole instance on that day. To recreate a painting that you had only seen once was something that was easy to say you would do, but to truly put

brush to paper would be very difficult.

Shi Yi was also somewhat hesitant until she saw him stand by the writing desk and bring his brush to paper.

Initially, it was reed, a single stem with many leaves.

Layer after layer was painted before he paused, as if he was remembering.

When the base of the reed was finished, the tip of the writing brush paused again. The brush was cleansed in water, then dipped lightly in ink. When the brush was brought back to the paper, it immediately created the lotus flower painted in the “boneless” style she had once painted. He was very focused, and his entire back was perfectly straight. His gaze looked through the lens of his glasses and fell upon the xuan paper in front of him.

A single stem of a lotus flower.

It was similar, yet at the same time, different.

The lotus flower and reed previously created by her brush had used brush strokes that were more light and graceful. It had been like the single lotus flower remaining in the pond at summer’s end. Pure, but somewhat aloof.

But now, the brushwork in this painting was more charming and uninhibited, like the first lotus that blossoms in early summer.

The atmosphere of the scene reflected the atmosphere of the heart.

Zhousheng Chen’s mother smiled and sighed that, although the mood of the painting was different, it already 70 to 80 percent resembled the original. Wenxing and Tong Jiaren were both staring at the painting, entranced, each of them lost in her own thoughts. Tilting his head slightly to the side, Zhousheng Chen looked at Shi Yi. “Does it look like it?”

Shi Yi was unable to speak, and so she smiled lightly. She only knew to gaze at him.

He cared about her. All this time, he had steadfastly abided by his promise made at the very beginning: to sincerely learn how to care about, treasure, and love her.

With only a single, hurried viewing, he was already able to bring a brush to paper and create the painting.

Had he not paid purposeful attention, this would have been very difficult to do.

Zhousheng Chen's eyes were also on her. Smiling, he changed brushes, and then, on the side of the painting, he wrote some words:

See there the purity of the lotus, and know then that the heart is untainted.[\[2\]](#)

This was Meng Haoran's[\[3\]](#) line of poetry.

She recognized it and also knew the connotation behind that line:

You can see, the lotus flower grows up out of the mud, yet still remains unsullied. So should you also caution yourself to not allow the world's views to trap you, but to hold true to your own heart.

Simple words, yet each word in that line struck her heart.

Her gaze shifted from the painting over to him.

"This is a line by Meng Haoran?" Wenxing was thrilled when she realized that she recognized it. "It's very fitting for this painting."

Tong Jiaren also smiled and echoed in a soft voice, "Yes, very fitting."

Within the room, only Zhousheng Chen's mother and Shi Yi could understand what he was saying through this line of poetry by Meng Haoran.

He had not participated in the discussion earlier.

However, it was not because he was compromising.

What he did, who he chose, from beginning to end, would never change.

See there the purity of the lotus, and know then that the heart is untainted.

The Shi Yi in his heart was this Shi Yi, who was like so. His Shi Yi.

[1] 碧涧明月 “bi jian ming yue.” Green tea. Its existence has been recorded as far back as the Qin-Han dynasties (~2000 years ago) and flourished in the Tang dynasty.

[2] Line from the poem, 《题大禹寺义公禅房》 “Master Yi’s Chamber in Dafu Temple” by Meng Haoran.

[3] 孟浩然 Meng Haoran, also known as Meng Hao-Jan, was a Tang dynasty poet.

Additional Comments:

I told you I really liked the scene when Shi Yi first made that painting, but I absolutely love this recreation of it. It’s like a mirror image. When Shi Yi first painted it, she had been absorbed in her own memories of him. The painting was, in some ways, an expression of those memories — the man who in her mind was like the pure lotus flower. And now, as Zhousheng Chen stands and makes the same painting, he is remembering her, her every movement, every detail. His painting is an expression of his feelings for her and his promise that he would learn to love her. And so he had. “All this time, he had steadfastly abided by his promise made at the very beginning: to sincerely learn how to care about, treasure, and love her.” This, right here, is what made me fall for Zhousheng Chen. Actions are a reflection of the heart, but sometimes, your actions can influence your heart. Love is not just a feeling. Love requires hard work. But how wonderful it is for Shi Yi to have someone who will work hard to love her because it means he will also work hard to maintain that love, to not fall out of love. This painting is also a demonstration of that. ♥

And, ah, how I love how Zhousheng Chen fights back. A single line of poetry shows his stance and also who Shi Yi is to him. Telling his mother that he will not change who he chose and also exhorting Shi Yi to stay true and not allow herself to be influenced by the things around her. And mostly, declaring that his Shi Yi in his heart is pure and untainted.

I really appreciate how the author throws in this one little line: “The

atmosphere of the scene reflects the atmosphere of the heart.” What do the two seemingly similar paintings reflect about the hearts of our leads? Shi Yi, pure and aloof, like the single lotus flower at the end of summer. This girl had spent this lifetime removed from almost everything else, for her heart was still caught in a time of the past, and now, all had faded away and her memories were the sole thing leftover from that era. But yet, her heart was pure, set only upon her goal of reuniting with him, untainted by the allure of power, wealth, *etc.* Zhousheng Chen, uninhibited and charming, like the first lotus blossom of summer. The Chinese words used to describe the feeling in the painting were 风流, two characters that I always bang my head against the wall trying to translate because the feeling it is supposed to give is quite complex. A bearing that is distinguished, a demonstration of talent, a sense the person is not constrained to conventional ways, a demeanour that draws people. He leads the charge, the first person to do it, acting against the constraints his family is trying to put on him. And his hard work will bring hope to the nation’s economy, like the first lotus blossom is the indication of summer.♥♥

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
41 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 13.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 13.3

[August 12, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [35 Comments](#)



Oh no! (All cliffhangers were planned by the author... I'm just the translator.
hides in a corner)

Edit: Formatting has been fixed now. Sorry about that!

Chapter 13.3 – Mysteries that Could Not Be Unraveled (3)

The lotus ponds of late summer seemed always to carry a sense of defeat, of ending.

But, as Shi Yi walked on the meandering stone bridge over the water, she did not feel that this was a scene of deterioration. The wilting away that occurred

entering into the autumn season and the thick icy surfaces of winter would eventually, in the coming year when the rivers started to break-up again, burst forth and spread out into vast stretches of lush green.

Summer would fade and fall would come, year after year.

She turned around and walked backwards, looking back at Zhousheng Chen, who was following two or three steps behind her. Regardless of whether it was the “he,” who with a single wave of his hand, could cause one hundred thousand soldiers to drop to their knee in a resounding boom, or the “he” before her eyes now, hands in the pockets of his trousers as he strolled leisurely over the white-stoned bridge, both were irreplaceable to her.

Shi Yi was grinning, and he was also smiling lightly.

“I... really don’t fit in with your family.”

He was not very concerned. “I do not fit in either.”

“Have you always been like this, since you were a child?”

With a laugh, he answered, “As a child, I was much like you, not really fitting in with people.”

She remembered that he knew everything about her, like the back of his hand, and felt slightly uneasy. “What you have... the information on me, how detailed is it, really?”

“How detailed?” Zhousheng Chen recollected briefly. “Detailed down to points like, you like to drink coffee with milk but no sugar.”

Shortly after they had first met, before they had even seen each other for the second time, he had already known all these things.

During those brief times they had connected in Xi’an, she had already been wholly transparent before him and he had been completely knowledgeable about her. But to her, he had always been a mystery. Each period of time that passed, or even each day, would cause her to be aware that everything she had once known about him was a guise.

Gradually, she halted her steps, and Zhousheng Chen naturally stopped as well.

“In the past, you’ve lived in this type of environment, too? Were you comfortable in that?”

Politics, mineral resources, land, gems and jewelry, drugs, and arms trade.

She felt, all these things seemed to go against his values.

“Me?” He seemed to be contemplating how he should word his reply. After a short silence, he answered, “I am not comfortable in it, nor do I like it, but I cannot extricate myself from it. Ties of blood are the only type of relationship that you cannot extricate yourself from. I like... a simple lifestyle.”

She gave an “mm,” and then teased softly, “And you like Venus more than the Earth that you live on.”

He chuckled amusedly at her words. Lowering his voice, he said seriously, “But first, one needs to protect the land beneath one’s own feet. If we are not even able to guard the land under our feet, there will be nothing that our brethren can depend upon, that they can fall back on for survival, right?”

Shi Yi followed the train of thought of his words and thought of many things.

Some time passed before she nodded and said, “Yes, just like... In the past, the reason why the Jews were massacred was because they did not have a homeland to call their own.” She mused, she understood what Zhousheng Chen meant.

Even if it had been several generations since your family emigrated out of the country, you were still Chinese.

No matter which corner of the world you may live in, if you did not have a powerful ancestral homeland, your security could be lost very easily.

Shi Yi gazed up at him for a moment, then stretched out her hand and gently patted the area of his chest over his heart. “Your heart holds too many things in it. I only need to occupy a small corner of it and that will be enough.”

Dinner was in their own courtyard wing, with just her and him.

This was also a rare moment within this last month where they could sit down, only the two of them, and have dinner together. Shi Yi had deliberately used a traditional herbal recipe to personally prepare soup with medicinal qualities for

him. Zhousheng Chen seemed to be repelled by the taste of traditional Chinese medicines. In that instant when he ate it, the expression on his face was like that of a teenage boy. Astonished, she guessed, "Did you consume too much of stuff like this when you were a kid, so now, psychologically, you're resistant to it?"

He, though, had already lowered his head and was continuing to drink that soup that was hot to hold and scalding to the mouth.

It seemed he was not too willing to admit those feelings.

The corner of her lips twitched, like they wanted to laugh. "Just admit that you're scared of taking medicines."

When he lifted his head again, a normal expression had returned to his face. "Mm-hmm. I don't really like it."

Spoken in all seriousness with no hint of a smile.

She could not conceal the good mood she was in and teased him with a couple more sentences.

Watching them, Uncle Lin could not restrain a smile. It was not often that Eldest Young Master was forced to admit a weakness.

Zhousheng Chen gave a light cough and then stated in a low voice, "Alright, if you continue to be so unruly, I will implement some domestic discipline."

"Domestic discipline?" she blurted first before instantly understanding what he meant.

Such vaguely suggestive, yet clearly affectionate words. It was a seldom chance that she could hear him say words like that, and yet, the moment he did say them, he made her cheeks and ears burn red.

She did not dare tease him anymore and started to eat her own dinner.

Perhaps because of their joking at dinnertime or possibly because of his special behavior this afternoon, during the hour of the day that was normally reserved for reading, she could not settle her heart. She sat at the desk beside the window and stole glances at Zhousheng Chen from the corner of her eye. His back rested against the back of the couch as he sat there rather relaxedly in a

simple shirt and trousers. His arm was slung casually on one side, and his fingers unconsciously toyed with the tassels on a throw pillow. He was very quiet and appeared to be absorbed in his reading.

She shifted and tried to engage herself in her book.

“Shi Yi?”

“Huh?” She turned around.

He looked at her. “Is there something on your mind?”

“No,” she answered offhandedly, trying to avoid the question. “Haven’t I been reading the whole time?”

“Every two minutes, you will move,” he exposed her with a slight smile. “It doesn’t seem like you are reading.”

“I...” She cast around in her mind, trying to find an excuse but then, she came around and realized with a laugh, “Hey, you weren’t focused on reading either if you knew I was restless.”

He raised his eyebrows. “Let me see what you are reading tonight.”

With an “mm,” she picked up her book, walked over to him, and set the book down on his lap.

But unexpectedly, his arm encircled her waist and pulled her down as he pressed her onto the couch with his body. This sudden action caught her off guard. Her surprise had just faded before she could already feel the obvious change in his body, which was snug against her own.

His heated breath slowly nestled up against her neck and chest, and she hurriedly shut her eyes, her heart and mind racing.

He lifted her up and carried her to the bed.

Soon, he had unfastened all the buttons of her pajamas.

Her hands instinctively clutched his shirt while her body squirmed slightly. For some reason, however, she felt a faint feeling of discomfort in her abdomen. Yet, it did not quite seem like her abdomen, either, and was like a dull pain radiating out from her chest.

She wanted to tell him that she suddenly felt unwell.

Without warning, someone called lightly from outside the door. “Eldest Young Master.”

Very unexpected.

Usually, if it was not an urgent matter, no one would come up to the second level during this hour of the day.

An expression of surprise flashed briefly across his face before he stopped, pulled the front of her pajamas closed for her, straightened his own garments slightly, and rose to open the door.

Standing on the other side was the young girl, and when she saw him open the door, she quietly informed him of her reason for coming.

Because they had deliberately lowered their voices, Shi Yi could not hear what the matter was and could only see Zhousheng Chen’s backside. Very quickly, he turned around and told her, “Something has arisen in the family. I need to leave at once.”

She nodded. “Go then.”

It was apparent that it was a very urgent matter. Shi Yi lightly exhaled a breath. The pain in her abdomen was still faintly there, so she pulled the embroidered covers over herself and lay down on the bed to rest. Gradually, she fell into sleep. Nightmares came, one after another.

She could not escape from them.

All she could feel was pain coursing through her entire body’s muscles, bones, and even blood and veins.

The pressure of the pain in her chest had long since caused her breathing to become difficult. She wanted to break free from her state of sleep, and she struggled against it.

Extremely painful. Tearing, ripping anguish.

She could not wake up. She was trapped within the dreams and the pain.

Finally, she rolled and fell to the floor. In that instant she made contact with the ground, the intense pain caused her to lose consciousness.

On the other side of the old manor, there, too, was another person who was suffering.

All the family physicians that were present were very familiar with Wenxing's physical condition, and they were quietly discussing what would be the most effective medical treatment. In fact, even prior to her return this time, Wenxing was supposed to undergo surgery, but she had insisted on returning back to China.

Unable to persuade her otherwise, Zhousheng Chen's mother could only as quickly as possible arrange for all the treatments.

That night, when she rescued Shi Yi, she had frightened everyone. Fortunately, the complications that came about had not been too serious.

But now, this was the delayed consequence.

Earlier, when her mind was still clear, she could blurrily make out the helpless expressions that surrounded her. Her eyes paused for several seconds on Mei Xing, who was standing further back behind everyone and only slowly moved away after Mei Xing had smiled faintly at her.

There were actually not many people there with her.

Zhousheng Chen was standing behind his mother, his eyes on her.

Her fingers moved slightly and were quickly enveloped gently into Mother's hand, but she weakly broke free of the hold. Her finger was all along pointing in the direction of her big brother. Zhousheng Chen understood. He drew near and crouched down beside her.

When he took Wenxing's hand into his own, her pointer finger started to move.

Very feebly, very slowly, she wrote two English letters: *GO*.

She stared unblinkingly into Zhousheng Chen's eyes, her own eyes filled with a longing, hoping that Zhousheng Chen would understand what she meant.

Leave this place. Leave this old manor in Zhenjiang.

The seas and sky are boundless. Let yourself live the life you desire.

Zhousheng Chen returned her gaze. Those deep black eyes did not show any emotional turmoil. Perhaps it could be said, he had always been very clear what his little sister's thoughts were. Like Shi Yi, she had once asked him if he did not like the lifestyle of this family. He had not denied it.

Very slowly, she drew again on his palm, this time, two vertical lines: 11.

And then stubbornly, she once again wrote the word, "go."

With great effort, she blinked her eyes and strained to breathe the oxygen.

Besides Zhousheng Chen and Wenxing themselves, no one had seen this brief, secret exchange between them. She soon sank back into a state of sleep. Zhousheng Chen's mother calmly rose to her feet and began, in a low voice, to talk to the four doctors behind her. The main points of the discussion were that surgery needed to be arranged as soon as possible and that the situation was not very optimistic.

Zhousheng Chen stood off to the side and listened. When everyone had left the room and only he and his mother remained, there was still no interaction between the two of them. "Your sister's situation this time," his mother spoke up first in the end, "should not have been this serious."

"Shi Yi did nothing wrong in this whole matter," he stated.

His mother looked levelly at him and in a very low, flat tone, she said, "I believe that girl is ill-omened."

"She is very ordinary. There are merely menacing things that have been trying to entangle themselves around her." Zhousheng Chen's words were blunt and left no consideration for her face.

"Do you think, if our family wanted a girl to disappear, we would need to use such gentle means to do so?"

Mother's eyes were cold and distant.

Zhousheng Chen also did not speak anymore.

To allow Wenxing to rest and recuperate her health, it was very quiet in this place. Even the sound of cicadas could not be heard.

There he stood, beside the window, staying with her the entire night.

It was nearly daybreak, approximately the hour of the morning meal, when Xiao Ren was at last informed about Wenxing's condition and rushed over. When he pushed open the door, he could sense the heavy atmosphere in the room, as if the air had nearly congealed around them.

Xiao Ren walked over to Zhousheng Chen's mother and then suddenly said, "Uncle has returned."

"Your uncle has returned?" Zhousheng Chen's mother was rather surprised by this.

"He just arrived." There were many words in his eyes, words that he could not speak out right then, and he only looked straight at Zhousheng Chen. "Big Brother, should you go to give your greetings?"

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

42 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Insert Chapter 2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Insert Chapter 2

[August 15, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [67 Comments](#)



So... um... Mo Bao Fei Bao had not intended to torture readers and had resolved the cliffhanger the next update, but the publisher decided to move this insert chapter here instead. And since I'm following the published book... tehe... You don't get to find out what happened to Shi Yi until one more update after.

Insert Chapter 2 – Treasure of My Heart

When the crown prince was five years old, he learned that the year he was born into the world, the various dukes, marquis, and high-level officials had suspected a mutiny within the imperial palace. The emperor's reason of death was unclear, and he, the crown prince had also come into position under unclear circumstances. But he was being viewed unjustly as well. The empress at the time had no children of her own, and so, she selected the youngest imperial child to be the crown prince.

And hence, this became the perk that had simply fallen into his lap.

At five years old, he already understood this truth.

To not contend for, not rob, not seize, and not desire anything.

When Empress Dowager told him to walk, he would walk, and when she told him to stop, he would stop.

The crown prince was frail from sickness, and the medicines he had taken since he was young numbered more than the food he had partaken. At the empress dowager's rebuke, he had had to stand one full day and night before the palace gates with a bowl of medicine cupped in his hands, not daring to move. Not allowed to move. Then, he had only been seven years old. He loved birds, and so, birds would die. He adored and yearned for the fish swimming in the waters, so from age seven to sixteen, he never saw another fish. The power to give life or death, including this lowly little person's life, was held in the hands of the woman who called herself, "Empress Dowager."

Gradually, he learned to not long for any living thing.

Until he saw her portrait painting.

The daughter of the Cui family of Qinghe — Shi Yi.

Her features were clean and delicate, but they were nothing more than clean and delicate. The two eunuchs attending by his side bowed and informed him in a low voice, "Imperial Highness, this is your future crown princess." He looked at the young girl in the portrait, who was merely ten years old and, with brush in hand, was painting.

She was the only gift he had ever been bestowed.

A feeling of wild elation filled him, but he dared not show it.

Since that day, every month, he would receive a painting of her as well as a written record of her each day.

She did not have the ability of speech and only enjoyed reading and painting.

The books she read encompassed all varieties of subject matters, and some were very interesting and entertaining. When she painted, she was only willing to paint lotus flowers. Lotus flower? What could be so good about the lotus flower? Perhaps this was an interest of a young girl. He did not understand, nor did he need to understand.

But her lotus flowers were painted very beautifully, indeed.

Each time, he tried to copy, to recreate her paintings, but he was unable to capture their essence.

Shi Yi. Eleven.

Amid the disciples of the Xiao Nanchen Prince's manor, she occupied merely the eleventh position. That year when she was seven years old, she had entered the manor and had been treated unkindly. Unable to speak, she could only be submissive and yielding. Later, she had often hidden herself in the library tower, and for an entire day at a time, her presence would not be seen. Was she also like him, averse to sharing her heart with other people?

That is no matter. In the future, you will be the most respected and honored woman in this palace. If you do not want to share your heart with other people, then there will only be you and me. I will never treat you unkindly.

After several years passed, as she gradually grew older, her senior brother and sisters now cherished and protected her, and she was also the sole person who received Xiao Nanchen Prince's doting affection.

He gathered famous teas from around the lands and sought out a lost music manuscript of a previous dynasty for her.

The relationship between Xiao Nanchen Prince and the preordained crown princess was ambiguous and questionable.

On the day of the empress dowager's birthday celebration, someone had submitted a statement to the throne claiming Xiao Nanchen Prince's intention to rebel against the state.

Many similar statements to the throne were submitted each year, and each year, they would be suppressed and controlled. This year, there was listed an additional charge against him, stating the rumours regarding him and the crown princess. Glaring out at the imperial court, the empress dowager threw down the statement and fiercely demanded, “The one who put forth this statement, stand forward. Should you unseat Xiao Nanchen Prince, the one hundred thousand retainers in his service shall belong to you.”

Nobody dared respond to the summons. All were silent, like the cicadas when the cold fell.

Surely, that was in jest. Xiao Nanchen Prince had led armies into battle since youth and had never suffered a defeat.

When the crown prince heard news of this in the Eastern Palace, he also did not say anything.

Who did not know that, in his ten years in this position, this puppet crown prince had always also been a voiceless crown prince?

How could the empress dowager not be afraid? The former armed uprising by the dukes, marquis, and high-level officials had been a result of a single statement by this Xiao Nanchen Prince:

“A rebellion is suspected within the palace.”

If he should he want the entire empire, she would have no choice but to submissively offer it up to him, so what was a mere crown princess? The empress dowager had once told her closest eunuchs, the roles people play all must mutually give some face to one another. She had chosen to disregard the lands to the northwest, asking only for peace and security for the remainder of her life and that Xiao Nanchen Prince would spare this imperial palace and dynasty so she, halfway into old age already, could peacefully enjoy riches and honor.

But the affairs of the world were unpredictable. The empress dowager died unexpectedly within the palace.

The crown prince sealed the imperial city[\[1\]](#) and prevented the announcement of this to the world. Using the empress dowager’s name, the first imperial decree he wrote was to summon the crown princess into the palace to complete the

marriage ceremony. And on that same day, he sent out a secret imperial summons to the Cui family of Qinghe to enter the palace.

That day, the representatives of the Cui family of Qinghe walked past each heavy palace gate and knelt outside of the Eastern Palace for two full *shichen* [four hours]. Half a *chi* [approximately 15-16 cm][\[2\]](#) of snow had accumulated. Their garments were sodden, and their knees had long since grown numb from the cold. They knelt into the middle of the night until finally, a eunuch came to lead them inside.

The crown prince of the Eastern Palace. Nobody from outside of the imperial palace had ever seen him before. The father and sons of the Cui family of Qinghe had been bestowed an utmost honour.

Upon the daybed, the pasty-complexioned man, who had eyes so dark they seemed as if ink had been dabbed on them, was wrapped in a thick, heavy cloak as he watched them for one entire *shichen* [two hours].

He uttered not a single word or phrase, occasionally merely drinking some water to moisten his throat.

As daybreak approached, someone brought in medicine. Through the rising steam of the medicine, his face seemed hazy, and he began to cough.

Within the vast Eastern Palace, there was not the slightest sound except for his wave after wave of coughing.

The father and sons of the Cui family of Qinghe hastily fell to their knees, pressing their faces to the ground, and they revealed to him what they had discussed on their way here: how Eleven's name would be used to lure Xiao Nanchen Prince into a trap to kill him. Crown Prince listened quietly but was somewhat displeased. "No matter what, Xiao Nanchen Prince is *Zhen's* [the imperial "I"][\[3\]](#) uncle. Your plan... is too wicked and underhanded. If the empress learns of this, how will *Zhen* explain it to her?"

An imperial succession ceremony had not yet been held, yet he was addressing himself as "Zhen."

“Your Imperial Majesty...” The father and sons of the Cui family of Qinghe hurriedly touched their foreheads against the floor further. “Zhousheng Chen is a great threat. To not eliminate him thus means that stability and order cannot be brought to the empire!”

He carried on drinking his medicine with lowered head. The steam seemed to stain his features until they became rather indistinct.

This scheme ultimately had captured the Xiao Nanchen Prince.

From when he assumed the position of crown prince, the first time he had ever met this Xiao Nanchen Prince was in a dimly lit dungeon. He as the ruler, he as the subject. He stood before him, yet he did not bow to him.

The crown prince of the past, now the emperor of the present.

To have taken the world but to have never received a bow from him.

Yet, he could not be blamed for that. He was dead already.

He wore a thick robe and cloak, but he still could not bear the cold, damp air of the dungeon. In his ten years in the imperial palace, by the bestowment of the empress dowager, daily, he had drunk poison, and now, he could only daily take medicines to prolong his life.

All he wanted was the one gift he had ever been granted, the only person that had ever belonged to him.

“In the imperial decree that day, when *Zhen* ordered you to adopt her as your daughter, my meaning had been to grant this empire to you in exchange for the beautiful maiden.” He smiled forlornly, and in a somewhat self-deprecating manner, he said to that person who was already dead, “At most, my lifespan is only another ten years. Ten years from now, who would have dared try to take it from you?”

“In the entire world, only the empress dowager and I knew the mystery of your birth and background. The empress dowager is dead, and *Zhen* will not say anything either. It is *Zhen* who has done wrong against you.” The night wind dispersed the smoke of the candle.

He left, leaving orders for a generous burial, but the criminal charge of conspiring and rebelling against the state still remained.

All of you were the ones who forced *Zhen*.

If Empress Dowager had not intended on allowing you to be with her, I would not have had to poison her, my imperial mother.

If you had not defied the decree, *Zhen* would not have plotted your death. With the death of Xiao Nanchen Prince, who in the imperial courts is now capable of shouldering the weight of this land? Nobody. Lives shall fall into suffering. People shall be forced to leave their homes into wandering.

Zhen had not intended this, nor did *Zhen* want this. But *Zhen*...

Historical records stated:

Emperor Dongling: Since childhood, he had been confined within the Eastern Palace, not allowed to come forth and be seen by others. Later, he received the assistance of the Cui family of Qinghe and captured the treasonous official, Xiao Nanchen Prince to bring justice back into the laws of the imperial court. The emperor's hatred for the Xiao Nanchen Prince ran deep into his bones due to rumors of the illicit relationship with the crown princess and hence, bestowed the punishment of death by deboning upon him.

Xiao Nanchen Prince's sentence was carried out for a full three shichen [6 hours], but there was not a single cry or howl of anguish. Even to death, he refused to repent.

His reign was for three years before his abrupt death. He left no offspring.

By the river, threads of spring rain; by the river, grass stretches levelly along the shore.

The Six Dynasties[\[4\]](#) of the past now seem but a dream amid the birds' empty twitters.

Most unfeeling are the willow trees of Taicheng,

For still they stand unchanging along the miles of misty riverbanks.[5]

The Six Dynasties were but faded away. Enmities and grievances had passed. Yet, Chang'an still stood.

Will you let me have the chance to truly see you, in person?

[1]皇城 “huang cheng.” This term, “imperial city” is not referring to the capital city, nor is it referring to the imperial palace. It was an area between the capital city (where the commoners resided) and the imperial palace. The imperial city, which was surrounded by its own city wall, was where the imperial kin lived (imperial uncles, aunts, etc.) and also contained things like government storehouses and offices, *etc.*

[2]尺 “chi.” A Chinese unit of length. Often described as the “Chinese foot.” The exact measurement of a “chi” has changed throughout history, ranging between 17 to 33 cm. In the 20th century, it was standardized to be equivalent to 33.33 cm. Although the ancient parts in this story are set in a purely fictional era, based on the clues we’ve been given, we know it is after the Tang dynasty and at the latest, in the early Song dynasty (hoju’s deduction only...), when the “chi” was approximately 31-32 cm.

[3]朕 “zhen.” In far ancient times, this character meant simply “I” or “me.” From the time of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China, this became something used by the emperor only. Hence, “Zhen” is the self-address used by Chinese emperors and can be thought of as the “imperial I”.

[4]六朝 “liu chao.” The Six Dynasties was a period spanning from 220-589 A.D. (see footnote [1] in Chapter 10.1)

[5] These four lines make up the poem, 台城 “Taicheng” by Tang dynasty poet, 韦庄 Wei Zhuang. The city of Jinling, which is now present day Nanjing, was the capital capital city during the time of the Six Dynasties and was a prosperous city at the time. This poem was written ~300 years after the end of that period. Taicheng was the site within the capital where the government site and palace once stood during that period. In short, the poem is saying, where once there stood a site of prosperity, now there is only a stretch of grass being dampened

by the spring rain. But the willow trees that may have even witnessed the fall of that era are unfeeling, for unaffected by all of it, they continue to do as they always did, changing only with the seasons.

Additional Comments:

My ancient-setting translating is a little rusty. :p All those palace terms...

You all know how Xiao Nanchen Prince's death saddens me and how I really feel for Shi Yi, who has to know the historical records of this great man are all lies. Eleven was anguished that it was her father and brothers who had framed and plotted against him, and modern day Shi Yi, despite having only fuzzy memories and not knowing how exactly he had died, knows that she owes him a great debt (following the belief that the debts of one's father is paid by his children). What would happen if Eleven had ever found out, or if Shi Yi somehow gains the knowledge that Xiao Nanchen Prince had only fallen into the trap because her family had used her as bait? How devastating.

By the way, I know you are all eagerly wanting to find out what's going on with modern Shi Yi, but this chapter is rather interesting. Did you change your perception of the crown prince? It was not for power or out of fear of losing his throne to his imperial uncle that he participated in the trap that ultimately captured Xiao Nanchen Prince and led to his death. He just wanted something to belong to him exclusively, and it was done out of jealousy and fear of not getting to "have" Shi Yi. If a psychological assessment was done on him, I'm sure more than one flag would pop up saying the poor man did not have all of his marbles, but a life of confinement, psychological torture, and then physical harm through slow poisoning would be enough to cause anyone to be a little unstable. The crown prince is called a "man," but he was born in the same year as Eleven — he was only 17 or 18 years old. And he spent 7 of those years placing all his hope and yearning into those portraits of Eleven, wanting only to see her, to "have" her.

Also, I wonder, why did he choose such a horrible death for Xiao Nanchen Prince? Or was he the one who chose it? Was it his psychological instability,

waffling between extreme hate for the man who was about to take “the treasure of his heart” from him and respect for this uncle, who was the only one capable of shouldering the weight of the land, hence his remorse and admission that he had done a wrong against him?

Lastly, just wanted to point out a little observation. The crown prince also tried to recreate Eleven’s paintings, but though he must have studied them, he was not able to capture their essence. While Zhousheng Chen did not completely recreate the mood of Shi Yi’s painting because “the atmosphere of the scene was a reflection of the atmosphere of the heart,” after a single, hurried viewing, according to his mother, it was already 70-80% like the original. Think this translates to something in terms of the fated affinity between them?

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

43 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 14.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 14.1

[August 19, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [68 Comments](#)



Hurry, Zhousheng Chen! What's happened to Shi Yi?

Chapter 14.1 – After Magnificence Has Become But Emptiness

“Alright.” Zhousheng Chen nodded. His body was somewhat stiff from standing the entire night. “I will return very shortly.”

Xiao Ren's eyes were evasive. He had clearly perceived that.

What possibly could cause him to have something to say, yet not dare say it? All the while as he proceeded downstairs, he mulled over Xiao Ren's bizarre behavior. There were two girls sweeping and cleaning the room on the main level. From the pocket of his trousers, he pulled out a blue, checkered handkerchief and gently pressed it over his mouth and nose, avoiding the dust that might be churned up.

Something he was avoiding mention of... Before Mother, he needed to avoid mentioning it...

His steps halted briefly. He thought of Shi Yi.

The instant his thoughts turned to her, he was already quickening his pace, and, with long strides, he hurried out of the courtyard along the bluestone path.

Because of Wenxing's illness, this entire courtyard wing was in absolute isolation. Anyone who wanted to come in was required to have been sent for by Zhousheng Chen's mother before that person was allowed to enter. He had forgotten this. In his worry for Wenxing, he had forgotten about this complication.

Sure enough, when he stepped out of the courtyard wing, he saw Uncle Lin's trusted aide standing not far away, looking at him with an extremely anxious expression that was lost of hope.

As he walked over in that direction, the people standing guard were forced to make an opening for him to pass through.

"What has happened to Shi Yi?" Zhousheng Chen gripped that person's arm, his fingers squeezing tightly.

"Emergency medical procedures are being carried out on Miss Shi."

"Emergency medical procedures?"

The man immediately explained, "Last night, in the middle of the night..."

Zhousheng Chen did not bother letting him say any more. Shoving him aside, he swiftly strode away. In this manor, there were a total of 68 courtyard wings and 1118 rooms. There were many people and the types of people were varied as well. He was always cool, always collected, always a bystander. He had always been able to remove himself from all those interpersonal relationships. No relationships were safe from being broken for the sake of personal gain and self-interest.

Deeds done with an agenda. Things done for personal gain. Human nature.

These were all things he was confident he could handle.

Only Shi Yi – just Shi Yi alone – was he unable to see through, unable to

decipher.

He was unable to remain collected, unable to keep only the role of a bystander.

He wanted to think. What could have went wrong? The game was already nearing its end, yet he still was unable to ensure her safety. But he was completely unable to think. And the fear. A feeling of fear he had never before tasted was winding tightly around him, binding his hands and feet.

He walked up the stairs, but when he merely heard the discussions of the medical emergency team, he did not dare proceed.

He did not dare take even a single step.

He believed in the natural sciences and did not fear death.

But he feared her death.

Immense fear mercilessly ate away into his nerves, his blood.

Zhousheng Chen's hands suddenly clenched fiercely into fists and slammed down on the handrail of the stairs. The extreme force caused the entire staircase to shudder. Everyone who was present there froze in alarm, and the young girl who had been coming down from the second level was petrified as she gaped dazedly at him.

"Eldest Young Master..."

Slowly, her dreams ceased.

She should wake up now. It was about time to wake up now, right?

Once again, she tried hard to waken from the nightmare. Her eyes felt swollen, but she forced herself to open them. A sliver of light could be seen. It was not too intense for the eyes and seemed as if it was being filtered through a layer of cloth, leaving only a comfortable brightness. The cloth's color was similar to the curtains of her home in Shanghai... In fact, it seemed to be exactly the same...

She was home? She was really in Shanghai?

For a moment, she thought she had still not struggled her way out of her dreams yet and had simply entered into a different nightmare.

Until she clearly saw his face and his features. She managed to turn the corner of her lips up, but she did not have the strength to speak.

“Acute appendicitis,” he stated quietly. “I was worried the household doctors would not be able to provide adequate care, so I brought you back to Shanghai.”

Acute appendicitis?

It truly had hurt so much she had wanted to die. She did not want to call that sort of pain back up into her memory, and now, she held only admiration for people who had once experienced this same sort of situation before.

But to return to Shanghai for acute appendicitis? Would that be making too much of a fuss over a minor issue?

She closed her eyes and pursed her lips slightly. Her lips were a little dry. Hmm...

For reasons unknown, perhaps owing to the weakness of her body right now, she felt an unexplainable sense of melancholy and fear.

She was afraid of leaving him.

Shi Yi, oh, Shi Yi, you’re acting more and more dainty and weak.

She silently scorned herself, but still, as if enticed by something, she called him softly, “Zhousheng Chen?”

“Mm.” He leaned in closer to her so she could speak with less effort.

His features were so clean.

Shi Yi looked at him intently. “I’ll... tell you a secret.”

“Tell me.” His voice was rather low and very steady.

“In my previous life, after I died,” she spoke in a soft voice, and she paused for several seconds before continuing, “I didn’t drink the soup of Old Lady Meng^[1].”

She did not know whether he understood what “the soup of Old Lady Meng” was.

He gave a slight smile. “In the Underworld?”

She smiled. He was so wonderful to play along with what she was saying.
“Yes.”

With an “mm,” he asked, “So, she let you off the hook?”

Shi Yi frowned slightly. She tried to remember, but the memory was not clear.
“Yes. Maybe it was because... I never did any bad things.”

He could not hold back a chuckle. “Then, I must have did bad things and was forced to drink it?”

“No.” For one brief moment, she was serious but then immediately relaxed again, worried that he might feel something was unusual. “You were wonderful.”

“I was wonderful?”

“Mm-hmm.”

So, so wonderful. There was no person better than you.

In a low voice, he asked, “You knew about me?”

“Yes.” She laughed lightly. “In our previous life, I knew you.”

She gazed at him.

I knew you and also feel sorrow and regrets that you do not remember me.

But that’s alright because I have remembered you all this time.

Zhousheng Chen continued to lean forward and watch her until she had closed her eyes, and then, he placed a gentle kiss on her forehead.

Gradually, he entered into a completely detached, unemotional, and objective mode of thinking.

He had a very good memory, and he could still recall how he had heard the doctors state that she was out of danger and how he had walked downstairs from the second level. Uncle Lin had, in the most concise manner, articulated Shi Yi’s sudden emergency situation.

The dosage of the poison had not been high. An old, timeworn composition.

Prolonged exposure to poison that slowly attacked and ate away at you was

actually the most deadly type of harm that could be delivered.

What had induced it? A cup of tea, or perhaps an incense stick, or an exquisitely presented teatime refreshment — these were all possibilities.

“Do you think, if our family wanted a girl to disappear, we would need to use such gentle means to do so?”

This was the basis for why he was having other suspicions.

Given that the purpose was clear, if it was Mother, why would she bother to use a method that acted so slowly, like slow-dripping droplets that only gradually permeated to its purpose?

Perhaps he too easily trusted people? But the number of people who could freely get close to Shi Yi was very few. Besides his most trusted subordinates, there was also Mei Xing... The most fearful thing had eventually occurred. Every person around him had been with him for many years, and each one was interwoven with too many relationships in the background. There was always ultimately a purpose behind each human behavior. What, then, was the reason that, time after time, someone would want her life?

In his head, he tallied the connections and relationships behind each person and various potential motives.

Shi Yi's sleep this time around seemed much more peaceful.

Very soon, her breathing had grown steady.

Zhousheng Chen unconsciously lifted up his arm, curved his index finger slightly, and gently stroked her face with it.

During those days when she was recovering and resting, Zhousheng Chen stayed at home with her until, at last, even Shi Yi started to protest and told him to go do the things he needed to do. There were some things that she felt bad saying, but with him there twenty-four hours a day by her side, she basically could not do anything either and was always distracted from paying attention to him.

Zhousheng Chen, on the other hand, would read when he ought to read and

work when he ought to work.

Concerned that he would not be used to staying there for an extended period of time, she suggested that they move to the house he had prepared for after their wedding. He declined and only made slight adjustments to the layout and arrangements in her home so that the environment was more suitable for her to rest and recuperate.

Comfortable in all respects with careful attention paid to the details.

This illness truly had sapped her body of its strength.

When her parents came, they were shocked by her wan, frail appearance.

Shi Yi was worried that her parents would blame Zhousheng Chen for not taking good care of her, so she repeatedly emphasized that in this last half a year, she had seldom gone to the gym and her body was weak such that even a case of appendicitis had turned into this severity.

Regarding treatment, Zhousheng Chen told her that at the time, he had chosen a more conservative treatment and decided not to go for surgery. She, too, felt that if medication could reduce the inflammation, it was best to not have to go into an operating room. "I'm scared of pain." She lightly thrummed her fingers on the back of his hand and arm. "If you think about it, I'm actually really wimpy and fragile... I'm not just scared of pain, I'm afraid of the dark, too," she joked as she looked at him. "Do you find me overly dainty and weak?"

In Wuzhen, because of an indistinct, possibly non-existent, sound, she had had him talk with her until morning.

Zhousheng Chen very meticulously wiped down each one of her fingers with a warm, wet towel. "No."

"Is that a serious answer?"

"Very serious."

"I... besides knowing how to read and study, paint, cook, clean, do voice acting..."

He let out a laugh. "You are all-round talented."

In fact, the things that brought about the most pride were the ones he had

once taught her.

He finished wiping her hands for her before helping her pull the cashmere throw up slightly higher and bringing some teatime refreshments over for her. He had just finished a shower, and seeing his hair was still damp, she reached up and touched it. "It's autumn already, but you still always leave it like this. You're going to catch a cold."

"I'm not worried. We have your secret remedy," he chuckled, his voice rather soft.

She knew he was referring to the purple perilla leaf medicine she had once brewed for him.

Through the thin lenses of his glasses, their eyes connected.

A certain feeling quietly arose between the two of them.

He coughed lightly, stood up from the couch, and went to flip through the DVDs in the cabinet. "Want to watch a movie?"

Shi Yi was amused, and she pondered for a moment. "Let's watch 'A Step Into the Past.' It'll take a few days to finish and can pass the time."

"Alright." He did not have a preference and bent over to press the power button of the DVD player.

From where she was sitting, she had a view of the television screen that still had not been turned on yet, and in it was his reflection.

A very clear outline of his figure.

He was looking at the DVD player, and she was looking at him.

The light blue, wool pants and white button-up shirt were the same ones he had worn that time he had stayed in her home. Clean and simple. Shi Yi fixed her eyes on him, feeling almost delirious with love. Sliding down on the sofa until she was lying on her side, she buried her face in the throw blanket and watched him, completely enamored.

Zhousheng Chen finally finished fiddling with the discs. Picking up the black remote control from beside the television, he turned around was about to say something to her.

But, when he saw her posture and manner, he immediately saw into her thoughts. “Sometimes, the feeling I get when you look at me really makes me feel like I am some sort of celebrity.”

“Am I that shallow?” Shi Yi covered half her face with the blanket, and in muffled voice, she said, “Zhousheng Chen, I love you.”

He made a sound in acknowledgement, and then, was unable to hold back a little laugh.

[1]孟婆汤 “Meng Po tang.” Literally, “the soup of Meng Po” or “the soup of Old Lady Meng.” In Chinese folklore, after someone dies and enters the netherworld, he/she must pass over the Naihe Bridge. On this bridge, Old Lady Meng serves every soul that crosses the bridge a soup that erases all memories of the previous life and allows the soul to enter into the next incarnation.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

44 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 14.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 14.2

[August 22, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [55 Comments](#)

h z



You may have sensed it already in the last few chapters, too, but things are starting to converge. Information and details slipped in over the next several chapters will lead to...

Chapter 14.2 – After Magnificence Has Become But Emptiness (2)

It was the last part of September.

The elderly lady from the Wang family paid an unexpected visit. Accompanying her were the eldest grandson of the Wang family, whom Shi Yi had met once,

and several meticulously dressed middle-aged women. Several months had passed since the last time she had seen her, but this elderly grandmother was still very polite and respectful to her, and there was even a slight sense of affection. When the old woman took a seat on the couch, she gently pulled on Shi Yi's hand and had her sit down as well, as if she knew very clearly that Shi Yi's health had not been very good.

"This Eldest Young Master's temperament is a little impatient, and the date of the wedding is too close. He did not leave more time for this granny to work." The elderly woman smiled and gently held Shi Yi's hand. "There are only six outfits. Take a look. Are there any that you like?"

Shi Yi suddenly understood. She glanced over toward Zhousheng Chen.

Unconsciously, the corners of her mouth turned up in a smile.

He had left the couch for them to use and was sitting on a wooden chair, his elbow propped on the armrest as he smiled back at her.

"These are still just the initial prototypes." The old woman observed their silent exchange and could not hold back her smile. "I estimate I will be coming back at least three or four times. Take a look at these ones first."

"Next time, I will go over to see you." Shi Yi felt apologetic for making such an elderly woman run around everywhere. "Granny, next time, when you are finished making them, let me know ahead of time and I can go see you."

"It is no bother," the old woman smiled. "You are only just recovering from your serious illness and Wenxing is also in a hospital in Shanghai. I am making one trip, but I can visit two people. Otherwise... I don't know when Wenxing will make a full recovery and come out to my little town to visit me."

Zhousheng Chen had mentioned Wenxing's hospitalization to her.

However, because of her health, he had not agreed to let her go to the hospital to visit.

These words of the elderly woman actually provided the opportunity she needed to her, and she took advantage of it, saying she would go with along with her to visit Wenxing. This time, Zhousheng Chen did not stop her.

Someone opened up a box, and shortly after, garments were hanging on a dark red frame.

Six traditional Chinese style gowns as well as a western style wedding dress were all hung up.

By now, she had worn several garments made by the Wang family.

However, most of those had been sewn by the Wang family's younger generation.

This time, it was a gown for the actual wedding banquet. The grandmother of the Wang family had personally designed it, and indeed, there was a difference. There was an indescribable sense of luxuriousness, yet at the same time, it was understated. From the choice of material to the design to the actual handicraft of sewing, everything was flawless.

Shi Yi was trying on the garments in the study, and only the old woman and Zhousheng Chen were present.

In passing, she had asked the question, why had Wang Man not come this time? She was aware that, because she was a woman and to observe proprieties, the Wang family usually would have Wang Man accompany Shi Yi during fittings. She reckoned that, even if the old woman came together with Wang Man, this practice would still be maintained.

Shi Yi had asked this question originally to show care and concern.

But the old woman sitting beside her grew rather quiet. When Shi Yi detected this, the woman had already let out a slight sigh. "She is in Shanghai, as well, but is here to rest and nurture her pregnancy."

Nurture her pregnancy?

Shi Yi remembered Wang Man was still unmarried.

Why would she...

She did not dare ask further.

It was actually Zhousheng Chen who gave a very light cough. "Granny Wang, my great apologies..."

“It was the girl’s own choice,” Granny Wang shook her head and said, “Eldest Young Master, you need not feel sorry. The girl had known that Second Young Master was already married, but she still... She has now moved out from the Wang family. She is aware of the Zhou family rules. Apart from the primary wife, all others are not allowed into the ancestral home.”

Shi Yi suddenly comprehended.

When she had finished her clothes fitting and Granny Wang had stepped out of the study first, Shi Yi finally asked quietly, “When did Wang Man become pregnant?”

“Around the same time as Tong Jiaren.” Zhousheng Chen gently patted her on her arm. “Go change.”

“Mm... It’s a pity.”

Based on Granny Wang’s statement that “apart from the primary wife, all others are not allowed into the ancestral home,” Wang Man should have “married” Zhou Wenchuan already. It was not surprising that the old-fashioned Zhou family would allow concubinage.

So what exactly did she find “a pity”?

She was not sure herself.

To have sought something but never been able to possess it. And therefore, a compromise was accepted.

But now, though it had been obtained, was the dream truly fulfilled?

The two of them were changing inside the fitting area. She helped him slip on a dress shirt, and then from the bottom up, she began gently fastening each of his buttons for him. Supporting himself with a hand on the wall cabinet, he pulled in his chest to accommodate her actions. After she was done and had slid her fingers around his collar to ensure that everything was in place, Zhousheng Chen at last explained in a low voice, “There are some things in the Zhou family that, if you are not comfortable with them, you should just treat them as if you did not know about them.”

Shi Yi answered with an “mm.”

Wenxing's pre-operative medical examination was consistently not meeting criteria and as a result, the date of her surgery was postponed time and again.

She studied medicine herself and also paid careful attention in ensuring that she was getting enough rest, and it seemed her condition was turning for the better.

Granny Wang was old in age, and after exchanging only a few sentences with Wenxing, she left the hospital. Shi Yi and Zhousheng Chen accompanied Wenxing out to the bench on the lawn to enjoy some sunshine. When Wenxing took a seat, Shi Yi stretched out her hand to ask for a blanket from Zhousheng Chen, which she placed over Wenxing's legs.

The afternoon sunlight of early autumn that fell on their bodies was warm but not hot and parching.

She sat down close to Wenxing while Zhousheng Chen stood to the side, keeping them company.

"In the lunar year, it's already... the ninth month?" Wenxing smiled and her eyes curved into crescents as she looked at Shi Yi.

Shi Yi nodded. "The seventh day of the ninth month."

"The ninth lunar month... is Chrysanthemum Month, right?"

"Yes."

Frowning, Wenxing complained, "It's only the ninth and twelfth months that are easy to remember. One takes place during the blooming season of chrysanthemums and is called Chrysanthemum Month while the other occurs when the world is covered in ice and snow and is called Ice Month. As for the other ones, when I was little, I was forced to memorize the names. You can say I did memorize them, but now, I've completely forgotten them all."

Amused by this, Shi Yi laughed, "These have no use, anyways, so it doesn't matter whether you remember them or not."

"But," Wenxing said quietly, "Mei Xing likes... the well-bred and learned young

lady type, like those girls from distinguished families.”

She was taken aback but was able to roughly deduce the meaning behind these words.

The person this young girl kept in her heart was the one known as “wasted willows, withered lotuses, but ‘Mei Rugu’ [plum blossoms as before]”.

She might have sensed this previously but it had not been confirmed. If one were to count, Wenxing was actually younger than Mei Xing by twelve or thirteen years. Mei Xing was someone who appeared as if there was much more than meets the eye. It was not very possible that a thirty-five year old unmarried man would not have his own stories, right? It was similar to Zhousheng Chen, who, despite not being interested in the things of romance that occurred between a man and a woman, he had also previously been engaged twice, simply for the sake of managing his family’s wishes.

She did not understand Mei Xing, but she did know that Wenxing was revealing something that she kept hidden in her heart.

And she just happened to be a person who did not know how to comfort people.

Fortunately, Wenxing quickly changed the topic. When she spoke, her eyes would sometimes bend into little crescents and other times, would open wide. She was very immersed into the conversation, as if she had not spoken for a long time and finally had the opportunity to meet someone likeminded whom she got along with. They sat there like this for more than forty minutes. When Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi brought her back up to her room, Wenxing’s cheeks were rosy and she was very happy.

At last, when they were leaving, Wenxing suddenly instructed Shi Yi, “Wang Man’s status is rather special. Eldest Sister-in-Law... it’s best that you don’t visit her.”

After saying this, she also turned to Zhousheng Chen. “Hey, remember that, okay?”

Zhousheng Chen smiled and lightly shook his head. “Be good and focus on getting better. Don’t think about these things.”

“I’m just concerned about you guys,” Wenxing protested with a smile. “Also, your wedding, I’m going to be there for sure. For sure.”

“Then get better first, pass all those criteria, and go for surgery.”

“Oh!” she exclaimed quietly, and she grabbed Zhousheng Chen’s right hand. “Let’s push back the surgery... What if, for some reason, after I have someone else’s heart in me, I won’t love my big brother the most anymore? What do we do then?”

Her tone was a little pouty.

Zhousheng Chen’s eyes were filled with warmth as he quietly gave her instructions, which were all merely some basic orders of the doctor.

Late that night, when all was still, she mulled over Wenxing’s words again, and as she did, she seemed to feel a sense of regret in them. Lying down in bed, she casually asked him whether he knew Wenxing liked Mei Xing. Zhousheng Chen was not surprised by the question. “I can tell.”

“You can tell?”

He did not really expound in detail. “It is very easy to see. It is similar to the first time you saw me, there were... feelings there that were quite surprising.”

With an “oh,” she told him, “Carry on.”

Even though she was pretending to be nonchalant, the tone of her voice had become floaty with anticipation.

Zhousheng Chen really did began to analyze it out for her. “The most difficult thing to conceal is emotions. Whom a girl likes is actually very easy to recognize. You watch her eyes, her actions, and the intonation of her voice when she speaks. Those things are basically enough for you to draw a conclusion.”

He was discussing the psychology of the large majority of women.

However, the association she drew was that, he had watched, from the stance of an onlooker, all her subtle little thoughts and posturing she had once had.

She coughed. “So, before, if someone... um... liked you, you would just look on

like a spectator?”

“Yes, like a spectator.” He pondered again. “And perhaps, I would also avoid being alone with that person so as to not give off any false impressions that could be interpreted incorrectly.”

“Well..... what if that person was someone you were required to respond to?”

She avoided using the word, “fiancée.”

He gave a low chuckle, not exposing whom she was implying. “Only if that person is my wife, then a response is required.”

The ideal answer.

Shi Yi did not pursue the topic, evidently satisfied already with his reply.

However, she was still concerned about Wenxing. She was not particularly eager to be a matchmaker, but since Zhousheng Chen understood the situation, she wanted to ask a bit more thoroughly about it in private. Gently tugging on his sleeve, she said, “So... Mei Xing’s feelings for Wenxing...”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t know?”

He contemplated briefly. “He and I do not talk about these things.”

“But Wenxing is your little sister. Being a little concerned about it is a good thing.”

“The most difficult thing to encounter in the world is where ‘you have feelings, as do I^[1].’”

Shi Yi could not believe that this was something Zhousheng Chen would say.

Sure enough, he quickly told her, “That is what Mei Xing said.”

Shi Yi thought for a moment, then out of the blue, asked, “What is the other name for the second lunar month?”

“Gan Xiang [Fragrant Violet].”

“What about the fourth month?”

“Huai Xu [A Row of Chinese Scholar Trees].” With a smile, he asked, “Why do you suddenly ask?”

“I was just thinking, isn’t it remarkable that a person would be insistent that his other half should like ancient literature?”

He replied with an “mm.”

Lying there beside him, she was still immersed in the story of Wenxing’s unrequited longing when she realized the wall lamps had been turned a little brighter. He lowered himself down to her and asked quietly, “Do you know how to speak the Suzhou dialect?”

“Yes.” She was somewhat baffled by his question. “I have relatives in Suzhou. It’s similar to Shanghainese. I’ve known it since I was a kid.”

They had both drank some water that had been soaked with lotus seed sprouts.

When they spoke, there was a very subtle, sweet fragrance on their breaths.

“Use the Suzhou dialect to recite some of those poems I taught you, alright?” He tilted his head slightly.

Softly, she answered him, “Alright.”

When had he ever taught her? He was obviously referring to, those Wu songs when he had... with her.

Those veiled or, sometimes, obvious lyrics and lines of flirting and seduction.

“I will go a little slower. If you feel uncomfortable, let me know, alright?”

She uttered an “mm” in answer, feeling as if her entire body was burning up.

These were thoughtful, considerate words, but yet, when he spoke them, they were laden with a thick, seductive overtone. She did not know whether it was deliberate or unintentional.

From memory, she began to recite them to him. Occasionally, when she was embarrassed, she would stop. The early autumn nights were already carrying a chill, so as the two of them turned and rolled together beneath the thin blanket,

even though they were perspiring, he did not dare tear the covers away, for fear she would catch a cold.

Gradually, she was unable to recite any further. The poems and verses from her lips were becoming disjointed and inarticulate, and her thoughts were no longer coherent in her mind.

.....

Before she drifted off into sleep, she finally remembered the question that had been puzzling her. "Zhousheng Chen?"

"Mm."

"Why did you want me to use the Suzhou dialect?....."

In the darkness, he seemed to be smiling. "Have you ever heard this line? *'Tinged with drunkenness, Wu voices speak so tenderly. Whose white-haired father and mother would they be?'*[\[2\]](#) A Wu accent speaking a Wu dialect to recite Wu songs is quite amusing."

She suddenly understood. This was a famous line that praised the sound of the Wu accent.

Amongst the Wu dialects, the Suzhou dialect was the softest and most mellow and soothing. "The speakers of Wu, soft are their words."[\[3\]](#) How very gentle and tender.

But the scene depicted in that line of poetry was simply describing warm, tender words spoken while a little drunken. From his lips, though, it seemed to take on a sensual, suggestive flavor...

Zhousheng Chen suddenly added, "There is nothing really remarkable about a person wanting his other half to like ancient literature. In itself, it can be a form of delight and appeal." Like reciting poems related to tea, like reciting tea names, or like the Wu songs he recited to her and the lines of poetry he would tell her.

Shi Yi thought about this. That was true.

But, because of these last words of his, she finally detected something. Resting her face against his chest, she listened to his rhythmic heartbeat and giggled quietly. "Zhousheng Chen, you were jealous."

[1] 你情我愿 “ni qing wo yuan.” In a more general sense, this actually means, “you are willing, as am I” or basically a situation of mutual consent. In the context of what it is saying here, it is a situation where two people are mutually willing to start a relationship.

[2] 醉里吴音相媚好，白发谁家翁媪？ This is a line from the poem, 清平乐 “Song of Peace and Tranquility” by Song dynasty poet, 辛弃疾 Xin Qiji. The first half of the poem describes the peaceful scene of a little thatched hut beside a grassy stream. From within that hut, soft voices that sound slightly drunken are speaking a Wu dialect and whispering sweet nothings, and it turns out that inside is an elderly couple.

[3] 吴侬软语 “wu nong ruan yu.” This idiom praises the Wu dialects and accents for being mellow, light, gentle, beautiful, and just generally, very pleasant to the ears. (Just to recap, the unique dialects from the southern area of the Yangtze River Delta are called “Wu dialects.” They are mainly spoken in Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, where the cities of Zhenjiang and Suzhou are located, and Zhejiang.)

Additional Comments:

Many interesting discussions came up after the last couple posts, and I’ve been having a ball just being a spectator. Forgive me if I don’t give detailed replies to your comments now. Like I said in the opening, things are slowly starting to come to light, and I’m trying not to influence any of your perceptions. I’ll just say that MBFB wrote certain things for a reason, and I surmise that your big reactions are something she’d be pleased with.

However, since my name was called out on the topic of Zhousheng Chen’s lack of response to Shi Yi’s “I love you,” I’ll put in my (long, rambling) few cents on it. Skip it if you’re not interested. Thought I’d lay out a little summary and timeline of the story to date first, though.

Some time in March (Based on cherry blossom season at Qinglong Temple)

Shi Yi spends a week in Xi'an where she meets up with Zhousheng Chen a few times. She returns to Shanghai, and shortly after, they go on their first real "date" where he tells her he likes Wu songs. :p

April 4-5 or so Shi Yi visits family in Zhenjiang for Qingming Festival.

Zhousheng Chen calls and suggests engagement.

Shi Yi visits the Zhou family ancestral home for the first time. She returns to Shanghai while he stays in Zhenjiang.

End of April Zhousheng Chen's surprise visit at Shi Yi's workplace.

He tells Shi Yi if the experimental method is wrong, they will change to a different one, but the research direction will never change.

He goes to Shi Yi's home for the first time and she brews him purple perilla leaf medicine.

Shi Yi receives an award.

Early May

Shi Yi sings "Within My Song" for a program, and then after, she initiates their first kiss.

A few days later, they return together to the Zhou manor in Zhenjiang.

Tang Xiaofu's death occurs. Shi Yi learns she and Zhousheng Chen are legally married, and he gives her the rings with their anniversary date engraved on them (May 11).

Shi Yi paints the lotus flower painting, and later that day, Zhousheng Chen initiates the "naughty kiss" with He Shan still on the phone.

Zhousheng Chen leaves the country the next day for a planned duration of 3 months.

Early July 61 days later, Shi Yi goes to Bremen, Germany to visit him for 1 week. He tells her of his investment plans to help China.

Zhousheng Chen's wedding ring is returned to Shi Yi by Zhou Wenchuan.

Near the end of the trip, Shi Yi witnesses a gun battle.

That same day, Shi Yi initiates physical intimacy for the first time, but nothing comes of it.

Mid to late July

Shi Yi goes to Wuzhen for work. Zhousheng Chen recites tea names and poetry over the phone because she is scared.

Xiao Ren visits her the next day.

2-3 days later, Zhousheng Chen ends his business trip earlier than expected and goes to see Shi Yi in Wuzhen. They consummate their marriage, and Shi Yi states, "I love you" for the first time.

They return to Shanghai together and stay in Shi Yi's place, with Zhousheng Chen commuting back and forth between Shanghai and Zhenjiang.

July 31 – Shi Yi goes to the Zhou manor with him for Ghost Month.

August 14 – Shi Yi nearly drowns.

Mid to late August

They visit Grandmother, and Zhou Wenchuan and Tong Jiaren are present. Zhousheng Chen recreates Shi Yi's lotus painting with the line of poetry declaring his stance to his mother.

That night, Shi Yi collapses from being poisoned. Zhousheng Chen takes Shi Yi back to Shanghai, by deduction, at the end of August or early September, whenever she is stable enough to be moved.

End of September

Basically this entire chapter, where we are in the story now.

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I know I have been saying over and over again that this is a slowly developed romance, and it is to us as readers. It's not instant sparks and passion, and it takes a large percentage of the novel for Zhousheng Chen to realize his feelings for Shi Yi. However, I also feel this might have created a bit of a misconception that lots of time has passed. When you look at it in novel time, from the beginning of this novel, in Xi'an, to this last chapter, it has only been around 6 months, and only 5.5-ish months since Zhousheng Chen put forth the suggestion of engagement. And, 2.5 of those 5.5 months, he was out of country and their communication was limited to their three phone calls a day.

We read Zhousheng Chen's thoughts, that he had been physically attracted to Shi Yi in Bremen, but he had suppressed those feelings. Why did he suppress them, given that they were already legally married? Part of it was because he, the gentleman he is, wanted to be sure that Shi Yi truly was comfortable with the intimacy, but I think another big reason is, as the relatively conservative person

that he is, he would not be physically intimate with someone unless he was certain of his feelings for that person. That's why, in Wuzhen, he had thought that perhaps he did not need to suppress the desire anymore. I believe it was in that scene there that he was consciously acknowledging his feelings for her, and hence, Shi Yi could sense the change in him after in their day-to-day lives. It took 3.5 months from when they were engaged for him to fall in love with Shi Yi. That day, when Shi Yi said for the first time that she loved him, he had just truly realized his feelings for her. For someone who was never interested in romance before and in general, is slow to warm to people, let's give him some credit for that timeframe. Then, the second "I love you" from Shi Yi happens about 1-1.5 months later, after the poisoning.

How would I describe Zhousheng Chen? Aloof, intellectual, logical, reserved, uncomfortable expressing emotions. Have any of you ever heard of the "[5 love languages](#)"? I believe, each person instinctively will first express love through the love language they are most comfortable with and are most affirmed by. I am confident that Zhousheng Chen's love language is most definitely not "words of affirmation." However, that does not mean he is not expressing his feelings. Remember he suddenly wanted to give Shi Yi a gift? When Shi Yi asked why, his response was, "Towards the woman he likes, a man's... instinctive behaviour." I suspect if we were to classify Zhousheng Chen's love languages, one of them would be "giving/receiving gifts." (Remember, when they first started their "courtship," Zhousheng Chen would regularly send gifts to her and even her family? I also suspect another one of his and Shi Yi's love languages is "quality time," like their regular reading time together.) I know it is frustrating to us, especially as smitten female readers, that Zhousheng Chen is not saying those crucial three words, but what's important is, is Shi Yi feeling that she is loved? Is she feeling frustrated that he has not said those three words to her yet? "He cared about her. All this time, he had steadfastly abided by his promise made at the very beginning: to sincerely learn how to care about, treasure, and love her." I don't believe this is because Shi Yi is extra tolerant due to her love for him. Remember that prior to Wuzhen, she had questioned before where their relationship was, too. Therefore, if Shi Yi herself is feeling loved and not frustrated that those words have not been said yet, I think Zhousheng Chen is doing more than adequate in speaking to Shi Yi in the love language she needs.

Does that mean I don't think those three words should be said? Definitely not. I think there is definitely power in a spoken confession, and I think it would thrill Shi Yi when he finally does say them. However, considering Zhousheng Chen's reserved personality, I don't think it's fair to judge the depths of his love by the lack of vocal expression of love at this moment. It's simply not fair to compare him to Shi Yi. Even if you completely disregard her previous life, Shi Yi has used this entire lifetime to realize and then focus on the depth of her love for him. Zhousheng Chen has had only one month or so. Is it realistic to expect that his awareness of his love be as deep as Shi Yi's? Eleven was a mute, and her deep desire was to be able to speak, to say his name, and probably to say how much she loved him. To me, the most important thing is that he *is* changing. Give him some time. If you go back and read how they interacted at the beginning of their relationship, the way he spoke to her was much more formal and cultured, similar to how he talked to everyone else, too. He is used to being reserved in language... partly personality, partly upbringing. He grew up in a family where, I'm pretty sure, he was rarely told by anyone that he was loved. Therefore, it is not surprising he does not know how to react to a spoken expression of love. Have you noticed, though, that now, when they are together, he speaks much more casually and naturally to her? I think he will eventually come around and say those words. It may never be out in public or romantically written across the sky or something extravagant like that. Most likely, it will be behind closed doors with only the two of them. Using a love language you are not accustomed to requires learning, but I think, one day, he will learn how to do it.

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Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

45 of 56 Main story segments

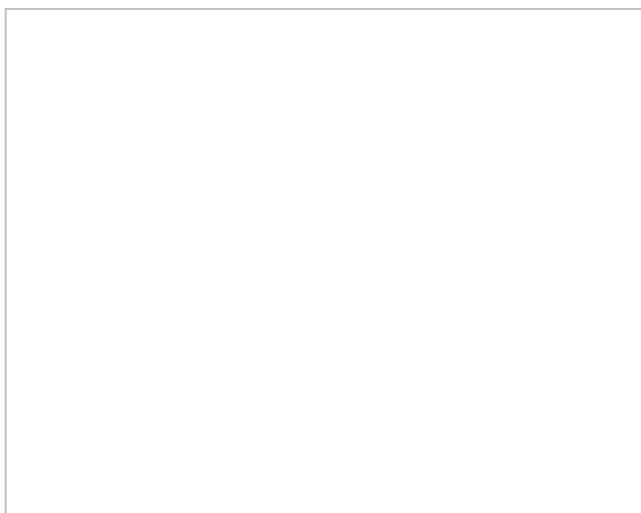
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 14.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 14.3

[August 26, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [64 Comments](#)



I like it when Shi Yi gives hints of a more playful side of her.

Chapter 14.3 – After Magnificence Has Become But Emptiness (3)

Two days later, she and Zhousheng Chen went to visit Wenxing.

Her condition appeared to be good, but she still was not meeting the criteria. In just this half a month, she had already missed a suitable donor heart that had become available. These were facts that Zhousheng Chen had told her earlier in a brief summary. She was not knowledgeable about organ transplants, but she did know that the dangers of congenital heart defects were much higher than heart disorders acquired later in life. Hence, she could not help feeling for Wenxing. It would always seem that the healers of others could not heal themselves.

This time, she ran into Mei Xing there.

Wenxing's hospital room had its own separate sitting room and couches. While Zhousheng Chen went to speak to the doctor, she headed to Wenxing's room first. A light blue tracksuit jacket was draped over Wenxing's shoulders, and she

was laughing quietly. Mei Xing was also laughing as he shook his head, pulled off his glasses, and wiped them with a handkerchief from his pocket.

“Sister-in-Law?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“Sister-in-Law, I have some nice tea here, and I’ve brewed two cups.” Wenxing took her own cup and gently slid it over so it was in front of Shi Yi. “I can’t drink it. You drink.”

Shi Yi was amused. “Indeed, you really should not drink tea. Why did you make a cup for yourself, then?”

“I saw Mei Xing and I was so excited I forgot.” Wenxing’s gaze drifted over to Mei Xing. “Source-of-Calamity[\[1\]](#) Mei.”

Mei Xing smiled, but it was a silent smile.

A nurse came in to perform a routine check on Wenxing. Shi Yi sat down on a single sofa and reached for the cup of tea, but just as her hand touched its base, Mei Xing also placed his hand on the other side of the teacup base and held it down.

Mei Xing’s eyes were dark, as if they had been dabbed with ink, and the expression in them was deep and unfathomable as they glanced over at her.

Perplexed, Shi Yi stared back at him, but hearing Wenxing calling for her, for the time being, she did not think on this further.

Later, when Zhousheng Chen arrived, he and Mei Xing spoke for some time in the small sitting room. Before he left, Mei Xing casually instructed someone to pour out the two cups of tea. As she watched the disappearing outline of his back and remembered the moment earlier on when their gazes had met, she was influenced by the atmosphere Mei Xing had exuded and actually started to think that there had been something wrong with that cup of tea.

Comparing him and Wenxing, it should be clear who should have the closer relationship with her...

She should not have any misgivings.

When Shi Yi was feeling a little better, she began making up the work she had dropped during her two months away and made plans to go to the studio the following week to record. Hearing that she was starting work again, Mei Lin ran through her work with her while complaining in between that the various producers were going to cause her to kill herself soon. That afternoon, the latest file of work was couriered over, and it was as thick as a book. In accordance with her vocal timbre, most roles were from a period or ancient setting.

She casually flipped through the file, familiarizing herself with the roles.

Her own book that she was writing, on the other hand, had been set aside.

The book was nearing its ending, and she was writing very slowly because she could not really remember his ending.

She was unable to recall why or how he had died. Since she was unable to remember, she could only go back to edit the earlier parts. However, because she cared too much about what she was writing, she struggled and agonized over the words and sentences chosen and would end up changing them over and over again.

Zhousheng Chen was very busy of late. Most of the time, she would eat by herself, and she was very used to him coming home late. That morning, after they visited Wenxing, he took her home and then left again.

She read through some scripts for a little while but then grew distracted and began to revise her own draft. Her editing ended up carrying on until past seven o'clock.

In her mind, she was deliberating over wording. Her hands gripped the stack of papers while she unconsciously drummed the table lightly with it. After a while, she turned her head and laid her cheek against the desktop. Her brows furrowed together, relaxed, then slowly furrowed again. Thoroughly absorbed in her own thoughts, she did not even notice that Zhousheng Chen had returned.

He hung up his coat that was still dripping droplets of water, and then, through the open door, he saw her in the study.

He stepped into the study. "What problems have you run into?"

Shi Yi instinctively closed her file folder and was about to stand, but he placed a hand on her shoulder.

He crouched down in front of her, motioning to her just to speak as she was.

After mulling for a moment, she had to admit to him, “Tangled in a trap of my own mind.”

“A trap of your own mind?”

“I’m writing something, and I want to write it in the best way possible so I’m overthinking the wording and sentences.” She exhaled lightly. “It’s a trap by my own mind.”

“Mm,” he said, indicating that he understood. “Let me think how I can help you get out of it.”

She laughingly scoffed, “I won’t trouble you, the great scientist, with this.”

“Shh... Let me think. I think I’ve come up with something.”

Amused, she nodded.

“Do you remember how I answered you in regards to what the second lunar month is known as?”

“Gan Xiang [Fragrant Violet].”

He nodded. “That was actually spoken out of my habit. If you delve into this more seriously, the second lunar month actually has many alternate names, and each of those names has a different origin. Wouldn’t it be very difficult, then, if you were forced to decide which is the better name?”

She admitted that what he was saying was true.

“Just like in the laboratory, I never require students to completely copy me. Everyone will have their own methods that are appropriate to them.” He contemplated briefly and then continued, “I am not very good at literary writing or essays, but I do know that the scholarly and literary persons of the past each had their own preferred or habitually used phrases and words. For both research and writing, the key lies in this.” With his finger, he lightly tapped his own temple and said, “Use the ways and styles you are used to using to write what you want to write.”

“Mm.”

“You haven’t had dinner?” He patted her stomach. “Hungry?”

She answered honestly, “Yes.”

“Let’s go.” He straightened. “We’ll go out to eat.”

“Now?” Simply from listening to the noise of the rain, she could imagine the weather outside.

“I looked at the weather forecast. The rain will stop in an hour. We will drive slowly and go to eat somewhere that takes a little longer to drive to.”

“The weather forecast?” Shi Yi had always had a bad impression about weather forecasts. “What if it’s not accurate?”

Shi Yi followed his footsteps, keeping along with his pace as she spoke to him.

Zhousheng Chen suddenly stopped and turned around. “There’s also the probability associated with rain stopping, right?”

Still hesitating, she said, “I’m just worried that we’ll trouble Uncle Lin. It’s such a rainy day and he still needs to come pick us up and take us to dinner.”

“This time, I’ll drive.”

“You’ll drive?”

He could not hold back a laugh. “I know how to drive.”

It was not that she did not trust him, but she really had not seen him drive before. Even after she was sitting in the front passenger seat in the underground parking garage, she still could not refrain from eyeing over the way he looked with his hands on the steering wheel, and she just seemed to feel that there was something discordant about the picture. After the vehicle had driven onto the overpass, though, she gradually became accustomed to it. He was very focused in everything he did, including driving, which he also did quietly and steadily.

The windshield wipers swayed back and forth incessantly, but the rain appeared to be easing up.

By the time their vehicle had driven out of Shanghai, the rain really did come to a stop.

There were many little towns surrounding the outskirts of Shanghai that were similar to the one the Wang family's old courtyard home was located in. She had only been there the one time, and it had been late in the night, so as yet, she still had not figured out what the name of that place was. She also did not know this place that he had driven to tonight either.

He parked the car in the car park at the entrance of the little town.

The rain had just stopped, and water was still pooled on the pavement.

Fortunately, she had not worn high heels, so with his hand supporting her, she leapt over the bigger puddles.

A few boats were moored along the riverbank, and there was a small, charming restaurant right on the shore where they were. The boats were not very big, and at most, each had room enough for only two tables. Zhousheng Chen had reserved one of them. When the two of them sat down inside the boat, a boatman handed them a menu.

"This was the only boat tonight that was not occupied. You two are very lucky."

Shi Yi smiled, lowering her head to look through the simple menu of only two pages. They did not have the option of being choosy. Coming to this sort of place meant that what they were "eating" would really only be the scenery and setting.

Worried that he would not be full even after they had eaten, she deliberately selected some dishes that were heartier and more filling.

"Please wait a short while. When the food is ready, we will pull away from shore."

The boatman hopped back onto the shore, leaving the two of them on the boat. On each side of the boat, there was only a chest-high railing. There were candlesticks, but no other lights. The most comfortable part of the setting was the seating. A pair of deep red, sofa-style seats faced each other, and a smaller person would be able to completely lie down on one. Even sitting upright like this, a person would sink right into the seat, and it was so comfortable it made you want to sleep.

“You’ve been here before?” She looked at him curiously.

Smiling, Zhousheng Chen shook his head. “My first time here. I asked someone last minute.”

She had reckoned this was the case. This Eldest Young Master was definitely not someone who would take pleasure in this sort of lifestyle.

The boat rocked slightly. The boatman had headed back over, and in a rather apologetic tone, he asked them, “There are two young people on the shore, and they would like to come up on the boat. I told them this entire boat has been reserved already, and they... wanted me to consult with you whether you might let them have the empty table?”

The boatman pointed in the direction of the shore.

The two of them glanced over at the same time at the young couple, who looked to be little more than twenty years old.

The boy was nervously staring at them, and when he saw that they had turned their heads in his direction, he was quick to secretly bring his palms together, begging them to please agree. Shi Yi giggled and heard Zhousheng Chen say, “I have no problem with it, and I believe, neither does my wife.”

“Mm-hmm. Let them come up.”

The boatman’s impression of this kindly looking couple grew even more favorable. He called out to the two youngsters to step onto the boat. Between the two tables was a bamboo curtain, and when it was lowered, the tables would be in separate spaces. The dishes were served, and the boat started to move.

Shortly after pulling away from the riverbank, it began to rain again.

She could hear the boy and girl behind the bamboo curtain quietly conversing, essentially calculating out their expenditures of this day and checking over the amounts carefully. From beginning to end, the girl would lament that more had been spent on this so more should be saved on that. “Look at you. You have so little money already, yet you still wanted to eat on this boat...”

Their voices were low, but Shi Yi still heard them clearly.

She remembered, when she had just graduated and started work at the

recording studio, there had been an intern recording engineer and his young girlfriend. The two of them would carefully calculate out each day's expense. From Monday through Friday, every meal would be planned out to simply save save enough so that on the weekend, they could enjoy a good meal or perhaps go for an outing in the surrounding area. This was most certainly the type of romance that belonged to young people.

She could not resist giving him a look, and then, she laughed quietly.

"What is it?"

Zhousheng Chen leaned back against the back of the sofa, his right arm resting off to the side on top of it as he glanced puzzledly at her. Shi Yi slipped over so that she was next to him, and then in his ear, she quietly repeated the girl's words. When she was finished and was about to briefly describe what she was feeling, Zhousheng Chen's face showed an expression of comprehension.

"Envious?"

She laughed, "Mm-hmm."

A smile spread across his face.

Outside, the rain was not showing any signs that it would be ending soon. The boatman brough their boat to a temporary stop under the cover of a "curtain" formed by the branches of the old trees on the side of the river. He told them that they would be sheltering from the rain for a while to avoid water splashing into the boat and wetting their clothing.

There, against the shore and with a wind blowing, they could see waves slapping against a rocky wall.

The candlesticks cast flickering shadows on the bamboo curtain.

"Have your ever seen a hand shadow show?"

"Hand shadow show?"

"Hmm... I'm guessing you haven't."

She remembered, watching television as a child, there had been a hand shadowgraphy program that had aired for several seasons. On the television, two people would manipulate their own fingers to form animal and human

shapes and use these to create a short story or mock things of real life. Back then, as she watched the program, she would vaguely remember that in the library tower of the past, she had also used the light cast by candles to make shadows when she was bored.

Because she was self-taught, the number of shapes she had known how to make had not been many.

In fact, when she had followed along with the television program, she had learned to make quite a few more.

Shi Yi formed the shape of a rabbit and was about to say something when she suddenly paused. “Today is the ninth day of the ninth month in the lunar calendar[2]?”

No wonder there were “double-ninth rice cakes[3]” amid the dishes on the table.



A couple examples of “double-ninth cake” or “Chongyang cake” (Image credit: [left](#) and [right](#))

He gave an “mm-hmm,” and then asked, “Are you making a rabbit shadow?”

“You can tell?” Grinning, Shi Yi wiggled her fingers, and the ears of the rabbit on the bamboo curtain also fluttered slightly in unison. She improvised a voice for it. “Oh..... The Vast Cold Palace[4] is so dreadfully cold and lonely. In the blink of an eye, the Moon Festival[5] has passed and it is the Double Ninth Festival already. I may as well go to the mortal world to walk around.”

Worried that the young couple on the neighbouring side would see, her voice was rather quiet, but the sense of drama in it was very ample.

He turned so he was sitting sideways, and he watched her performance closely.

Shi Yi blew a soft breath on the candle.

The shadows from the candle flickered, and the rabbit disappeared. She turned and knelt herself down on the sofa, her own shadow now falling on the bamboo curtain, clear, yet frail. “This noble young master here, could it be that we... had once seen each other, in another place?...”

Light. Gentle.

It was the voice style she was most adept in, her ancient-style voice.

His lips turned up into a smile. Playing along with her, he asked quietly in reply, “Oh? Is that the case?”

“Noble young master, may I know your name?.....” Her eyes sparkled and her voice became even lighter.

He pondered for a brief moment, then looked directly into her eyes. “Zhousheng, with the single character given name, Chen.”

[1] 梅祸水 “Mei Huo Shui.” 祸水 “huo shui” literally means “water of calamity,” *i.e.* a great flood, and this is comparing a person, usually a woman, to a flood that brings disaster on the people. Here, Wenxing is not only jokingly calling Mei Xing someone who brings trouble but also teasing him by addressing him using something that would usually be reserved for a girl.

[2] The ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar is 重阳节 Chongyang Festival (重 “chong” means repeat, and the number “9” is considered the number of yang, as opposed to yin), also called the Double Ninth Festival in English, and has roots dating back a couple thousand years. Taking place in late autumn, during this festival, people go out hiking on the mountains, admire chrysanthemums, and pay respects to their elders because “9” sometimes also symbolizes longevity. In 2011, the year of this story, the festival corresponded to October 5 on the Gregorian calendar.

[3] 花糕 “hua gao.” Literally meaning “flower cakes.” Also called 菊糕 “chrysanthemum cake” or 重阳糕 “chongyang cake”/“double-ninth cakes.” These are cakes made of a rice flour base and contain ingredients such as red bean, nuts (walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, etc.) and preserved fruits (dates,

apricots, apples, etc).

[4] 广寒宫 “Guang Han Gong.” “Guanghan Palace” or “Vast Cold Palace.” Sometimes simply called “Moon Palace.” In Chinese mythology, it is the home of Chang’e, the moon deity. The legend of Chang’e has many variations, but in general, Chang’e drank the elixir of immortality and floated to the moon where she forever lives with only the company of a rabbit called the Jade Rabbit. Shi Yi’s hand shadow rabbit was supposed to be the Jade Rabbit.

[5] 中秋 “Zhong Qiu.” The Moon Festival, also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival, takes place on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. On this day, the moon is at its roundest and brightest, and hence, the legend of Chang’e and the Jade Rabbit are often associated with this festival. In 2011, the year of this story, this corresponds to September 12 on the Gregorian calendar.



Additional Comments:

“Use the ways and styles you are used to using to write what you want to write.” Such a simple principle, right? But I got caught in a trap of my own mind in translating, as well. Similar to Shi Yi, I’ve been trying so hard to make this translation the best reflection of MBFB’s writing that there are times I’ve written and re-written multiple versions of the same Chinese sentence for more than an hour, looking for the right words, debating author intent vs. honouring author’s words more literally. My hubby thinks I’m weird. :p Zhousheng Chen’s advice to Shi Yi was like a lightbulb moment for me, too. I feel like Teacher Zhousheng Chen and Teacher Mo Bao Fei Bao were talking to just little ol’ me. :p

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue
46 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#)

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Chapter 15.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 15.1

[August 29, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [55 Comments](#)



I love this picture. I've been trying to find a post to use it.

More information revealed...

Chapter 15.1 – To Leave Painted Only Half of One's Face (1)

Zhousheng, with the single character given name, Chen.

Zhousheng, Chen.

Zhousheng Chen.

So many years have passed since being separated by life and death, yet never did your soul enter my dreams.[\[1\]](#)

Outside the boat, the rain came down in a fine, continuous drizzle. There was no wind.

Inside the boat, the light and shadows cast on the bamboo curtain seemed as if they had been infinitely stretched out as they fluttered slightly. The young

couple in the adjoining space did not want to disturb them either and were not speaking loudly. And hence, she could only hear him, and he could only hear her.

She exhaled softly, and then said in a low voice, “Noble young master’s name... is one this lowly girl has heard before.”

His eyes were bright and clear. “From where was it heard?”

She seemed to grow serious. “Noble young master’s name is renowned through the land. Naturally, then, it would have been from the mouths of the common man.”

“Oh?” He smiled, “And what is it that is said?”

Her voice light and her eyes gazing straight into his, Shi Yi said, “ ‘Drunken he lays upon a stretch of white bones, uninhibited and free in song. A jug of wine, a single horse; in this world, how many are true rulers?’ ”

Zhousheng Chen fell silent for a moment, carefully absorbing her words.

He believed he could guess whom she was referring to. “You really like that Xiao Nanchen Prince?”

“You know about him?”

“Yes,” he told her. “He is in the Zhousheng family genealogy records. My name was taken from his.”

“Right...” She remembered, “Xiao Ren mentioned that to me. Would what’s written about him in your family’s genealogy records have more information than what’s commonly available?”

“There are only a few sentences.”

“What about that crown princess?”

“The Cui family’s daughter?”

It was rare to find a woman’s name documented in historical records. To have something such as “Cui family’s daughter” recorded was already considered a special treatment and was only because of her high and esteemed status.

“Mm-hmm. Is there anything?”

Zhousheng Chen thought back in his mind for a little while, but then shook his

head and said, “No.”

So many years have passed since being separated by life and death. Apart from her, truly, no one would remember anymore.

For one brief moment, she stared out blankly in despondency.

The boat was swaying slightly. The boatman said that the rain seemed as if it would be coming down for the entire night and advised that it would be best if they returned to shore as soon as possible to allow the guests to be able to return home. Their boat pulled out from under the canopy created by the old trees and followed back along the same way they had come. After leaving the protection of the tree covering, quite a bit of rain would splatter in. With rain coming in on both sides of the boat, there was no place to hide from it. Zhousheng Chen pulled off his coat and covered Shi Yi’s legs with it.

Very shortly, his own trousers were soaked..

Prior to tonight, there had still been the remnants of summer heat in the air, but this rain really left behind the feeling of autumn.

Only the bottom of her slacks and her shoes had gotten wet, and she already felt the cold was unbearable.

He went to the vehicle first to get an umbrella to pick her up, and in his trip there and back, his button-up shirt became sodden as well. After the two had gotten into their vehicle, he went to the trunk and pulled out two pairs of track pants and two shirts from a small suitcase that was inside before he walked back to the front, reclined the seat, and handed one of the pants to her. “It is a little big, but put it on first.” Fortunately, it was late and there was no one in the parking lot.

“Mm.” She took it from him and in that tight, little space, began to remove her slacks, shoes, and socks.

And then, she slipped on his pants. It was much more than just “a little big,” and it was very long, too...

Her feet bare, she stepped on the bottom part of the pant legs, not needing to wear shoes at all.

She heaved a long sigh. "I only just discovered today that your legs are so much longer than mine."

Finding the sight rather amusing, Zhousheng Chen threw a couple extra glances at her.

He took a clean dress shirt, folded it, and placed it underneath her feet. His hand brushed against her foot. It was frightfully cold. "Are you very cold?"

"A little bit." Her voice had already started to take on a nasal tone.

Taking her two feet into his hands, he set them on his knees and gently began to rub them.

Shi Yi was somewhat surprised, but she compliantly allowed him to do so.

He had never been skilled at verbally expressing his emotions, but in their times together, he would occasionally do something that would allow her to tangibly sense his feelings for her. They were not intense and scorching, but slowly, they penetrated deep into her.

The warm wind of the car's heat and his actions allowed her feet to gradually warm up.

Shi Yi shifted her feet.

He lifted his eyes to look at her. "Warmer now?"

"Mm-hmm." She urged him, "Hurry and change your clothes."

She pulled her feet back and set them on the clean shirt he had folded, then handed the clothes that had been on the backseat to him.

Zhousheng Chen swiftly changed out of his button-up shirt and trousers. When he had put on the clean pants, she took his wet clothing from him and tossed them into the backseat. Unexpectedly, she sensed him leaning in towards her. The distinct, gentle warmth of his breath caused her awareness to grow fuzzy, and she turned her head to the side, allowing her lips to bump his.

Inside the car, the two of them silently kissed.

Her body had gone from feeling icy-cold to a somewhat unbearable parching heat. As her fingers toyed with his shirt, they unintentionally brushed against his

chest.

She suddenly became aware that this was still the car park.

She nudged him and said quietly, "Let's go home."

He kissed her lightly on the cheek and said an "alright" before, at last, buttoning up his shirt.

As their vehicle pulled out of the car park, he suddenly remembered something. "When we have confirmed a date for our wedding, how about we arrange for my mother to have dinner with your parents?"

Shi Yi was taken aback for a moment, and she gaped incredulously at him, her eyes filled with a delighted surprise. "Really?"

He smiled. "Really."

It had been Shi Yi's desire to not set a firm wedding date yet.

She wanted their wedding ceremony to be held after Wenxing's surgery. After all, prior to that, most of Zhousheng Chen's thoughts would be on Wenxing anyway, and Shi Yi was the same. However, she could inform her parents with certainty that they were already starting to prepare for their wedding. She had faith in Zhousheng Chen. Since he had already arranged for Granny Wang to begin making their wedding attire, this indicated that he was fully assured that he would be victorious in regards to the matters of the family.

Today, she would be recording at the studio, and this particular studio happened to be in the same building as the television station.

As a result, she arranged to meet-up with Hong Xiaoyu for lunch, planning to chat with her for a little while before she officially started her day's work.

They were both not particular about what they ate, so they simply went to a small restaurant in the vicinity.

Not long after their food had been served, Hong Xiaoyu began telling her about her boyfriend. "Shi Yi, I'm going to tell you something. I think my feelings are

genuine. I want to get married.”

Shi Yi smiled, “Let me eat first.”

“No, no. You have to talk to me...”

“Alright. You talk, I’m listening.”

“Um... There’s actually really not much to say. I just feel like he has very good character. You know, the type of goodness that comes from the very core of who you are. You can sense it.” Wang Xiaoyu thought for a moment and added, “He’s different from that scientist of yours. Your scientist seems almost like he ‘does not partake of the food of mere mortals’ [2] [not part of this world]... Gives people a sense of being distant and removed.”

“Does he?” Shi Yi thought he was rather normal.

“ ‘Does not partake of the food of mere mortals’ seems a little strange when used to describe a man. Anyway, it’s like, he does not really care about the vast majority of things. When you guys are together... is it pleasant and harmonious?”

Her question made Shi Yi feel, um... seriously. She glanced at Hong Xiaoyu, but did not say anything.

“It’s really good? Really bad?”

“Alright, alright. “She shoved a cup of tea over to Hong Xiaoyu. “Change the topic.”

Typically, her working hours went from noon until eleven or twelve o’clock at night.

Since she had just recovered from a serious illness, in the first half a month after she went back to work, she would record only until nine o’clock and then finish up. Today, because the recording engineer had matters to attend to, they had already finished their work for the day shortly after eight.

She made a phone call to Zhousheng Chen. “I’m finished early.”

“Alright. I will be there in approximately thirty minutes.”

“Don’t rush.” She sat down on the couch and, from the shelf beside her, pulled

out a magazine. "I have a place here where I can rest. Just come after you're done taking care of your things."

"Alright."

Zhousheng Chen hung up his mobile phone and then looked over at Tong Jiaren, who was sitting beside him.

Earlier on, when he had stepped into the parking garage, he had seen her standing beside his vehicle. She was already four or five months pregnant, but there was no one with her. He did not know what her purpose for coming was and merely invited her into the car first before any further discussions.

Their conversation was in the vehicle, so Uncle Lin stepped out the car.

"That was Shi Yi?"

Zhousheng Chen smiled but did not reply.

Tong Jiaren also did not immediately speak and simply tugged down gently on her gloves, glancing at him from the corner of her eye.

The Zhousheng Chen sitting beside her still liked to wear plain trousers and light-colored, checkered dress shirts. A suit jacket worn overtop and he would be ready to meet visitors or clients. Changing into the long, white coat on top and he could step straight into the laboratory. This was the man that she truly kept in her heart, the one who could dialogue with people of all skin colors, completely uninhibited by national borders, and who did things that would benefit mankind.

She recalled, the first time she had seen him outside of a laboratory setting, he had been different from the normal Zhousheng Chen.

At that moment, he had been arguing about something with a black person, focused and passionate. She had not understood what he was saying.

From when he entered university at fourteen years old, they had become separated into two different worlds. She had tried with all her might to catch up to him, but this had still only qualified her to be invited to some of the same meetings as him that were more about formalities than of actual substance. That was all.

The world of his mind, thoughts, and beliefs had been her life's goal.

In that moment, Tong Jiaren's mind was on the things of the past. She even started to doubt why she had come to see him. To be able to quietly be with him for a few minutes, or to...?

"I will not choose to make the situation the worst possible."

In the end, it was Zhousheng Chen who spoke first. Before she had said anything, he had first given her the answer.

His words were frank. "No matter what, we are family."

His lenience and forgiveness made her unable to find words.

Since Uncle's return, all the things that Zhou Wenchuan had done had filled her with disdain.

Never before had she ever seen such a tumultuous Zhou family. The elder generation all turned a deaf ear while the younger generation was restlessly stirring, preoccupied with choosing their side – to join themselves with the Eldest Young Master, who was the rightful and legitimate person, or to choose Uncle and Zhou Wenchuan, whose foundation of power was firm and well-established. Only a few days ago, Zhousheng Chen's mother, who had since the beginning remained silent on all of this, finally began to recognize Shi Yi's status. This was equivalent to siding with her eldest son.

Uncle could be remarkably capable, but he still was not the rightful successor. The choice of Zhousheng Chen's mother was clearly pointing out the direction for everyone else, including close friends from the past of Zhousheng Chen's father, who were now gradually starting to reveal their stance.

"I'm sorry," she said.

He looked at her.

"I'm talking about the incident when she was in Wuzhen."

"I know." Zhousheng Chen's tone was very impassive.

"It was because I... was jealous of her."

He smiled, but did not speak.

Tong Jiaren thought, before such an intelligent person, it seemed like anything

she said was merely repeating something he already knew. It was out of jealousy that, when she learned that Zhou Wenchuan had sent people to abduct Shi Yi, she had not tried to prevent it or even to warn her. She recalled that every time Zhou Wenchuan mentioned this topic, he would always mockingly jeer, “My dear wife, I truly did trust you during that time because I knew you must be jealous of her.”

“My apologies, Jiaren.” He glanced at his watch. “I need to leave now.”

It required fifteen minutes driving time from this place to where Shi Yi was, and their conversation just now had already used ten minutes.

She forced a smile. “It is I who should apologize.”

She knew he honored punctuality, so she did not attempt to say anymore. Opening the door, she stepped out of the vehicle.

Uncle Lin, too, was looking at his watch. When he saw Tong Jiaren had gotten out, he nodded and inquired, “Do you, Second Young Madam require a vehicle to be arranged to pick you up?”

“No, thank you. A vehicle will be here soon for me.”

Uncle Lin nodded once more. Soon after he had sat back into the car, he had driven out of the parking garage.

She stood off to the side of the road, completely unable to see through the window to the person on the other side, but in her mind, she could easily evoke the image of a figure sitting inside.

The curve of his back, the position of his arm, as well as his expression when he spoke to Uncle Lin.

When she was only a few years old, she had already sat in the same car with him. Even up to their teenage years, up to when she had graduated from university, up to the time prior to the wedding, she had been the only girl who had ever shared a vehicle with him. It was to the extent that, even now, she still was not accustomed to the feeling of Zhou Wenchuan sitting beside her. He was too restless and edgy. No matter how hard he tried to conceal it, Zhou Wenchuan’s heart was restless and edgy because he coveted.

Unlike him. He would never be able to be like him.

[1] 悠悠生死别经年，魂魄不曾来入梦。This is a line from Tang dynasty poet, Bai Juyi's (see footnote [1], chapter 9.1) famous poem, 长恨歌 "Song of Everlasting Regret."

[2] 不食人间烟火 "bu shi ren jian yan huo." This phrase, "to not partake of the food of mere mortals," was originally used to describe immortals or those who studied Taoist ways, *i.e.* removed from the things of the mortal world. When used to describe a person, especially a woman, it could be referring to someone who has such beauty or bearing that appears almost ethereal. (Think Xiao Long Nü from Jin Yong's "Return of the Condor Heroes.") But on the flip side, it could simply carry connotations that a person has an aloof, even antisocial temperament, and does not really fit in with the crowd. In describing Zhousheng Chen, it is kind of carrying all those connotations. His aspirations and career seem so far from the things of ordinary people that he does seem almost separate from the mortal world, to the point that he exudes a sense that people can't get close to him.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

47 of 56 Main story segments

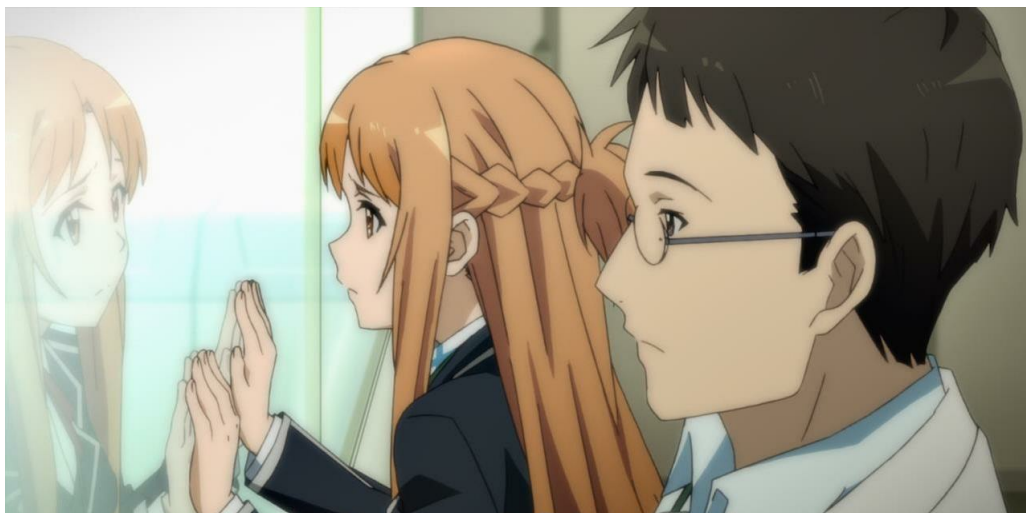
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 15.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 15.2

[September 2, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [49 Comments](#)



As Zhousheng Chen knows from being part of the Zhou family, and to quote him, “No relationships were safe from being broken for the sake of personal gain and self-interest.” *sigh*

Chapter 15.2 – To Leave Painted Only Half of One’s Face (2)

By the time they returned home that evening, it was already nearing nine o’clock.

They both had not eaten yet. Shi Yi haphazardly tied up her hair and pulled out two veal steaks from the refrigerator, planning to pan-fry steak for him and also make some French fries or something similar. She washed her hands and had begun slicing the potatoes into strips when the doorbell suddenly rang.

Someone was gently banging on the door with a palm. It sounded anxious, but the knocking was not heavy.

It was obvious the noise was being made by a child.

Sure enough, a young girl’s voice immediately rang out, calling her name.

“Help me open the door. It’s the next-door neighbor.”

Zhousheng Chen did as he was told and went to open the door.

A young girl who appeared to be thirteen or fourteen years old stood outside holding a *guqin*[\[1\]](#) in her arms.

When she saw Zhousheng Chen, she was dumbstruck, and Zhousheng Chen was rather wordless when he saw her as well.

“Big Sister Shi Yi... has moved?”

“No.” He bent slightly at the waist to speak to her. “She’s cooking.”

Soon, Shi Yi had finished cutting the potatoes, and after wiping her hands clean, she came from behind Zhousheng Chen, walked around him, and stretched out her hand to pinch the girl’s cheek. “You changed your strings? Here...” She had not finished speaking when, unexpectedly, a white shape darted out from behind the girl.

There seemed to be a blur in front of her eyes, and before she could react, Zhousheng Chen had lifted her up so she lay across his arms.

Only one more step and the dog would have pounced on her.

The dog was barking with all its might, trying relentlessly to leap up. It truly did want to bite her.

She was stunned.

The little girl, too, was shocked, but quickly, she snapped in a low voice, “Kaka, go home now!”

Amid repeated berating, the dog, at last, unwillingly and reluctantly returned to its own home, its tail wagging. The girl very embarrassedly jogged back, closed the door to her home, came back to them, and said, “Kaka is really silly. He’s cautious around strangers.”

Zhousheng Chen was still feeling lingering trepidation as he carefully lowered her back down to her feet.

She did not take this little episode to heart. Since she was a child, dogs and cats had always acted aggressively towards her, and Shi Yi had long since grown

accustomed to this.

She set the *guqin* on the table and tested the sound.

This girl liked Shi Yi very much, and every time she changed the strings on her *guqin*, she would be sure to bring it to Shi Yi to tune. Shi Yi happily obliged, and on and off, she played a tune that she was familiar with.

She did not play often and had not grown her nails, so the sounds produced were somewhat flawed.

Still, the flaws could not mask the beauty.

The young girl could not discern the quality of her playing, but it was apparent to Zhousheng Chen as he listened.

[A music that] Thaws the glistening cold before the Twelve Gates. The twenty-three strings rouse even the Purple Emperor.[\[2\]](#)

He suddenly thought of this line of poetry, even though the poem was describing the music of a *konghou* [ancient Chinese harp][\[3\]](#) but the instrument before her was a *guqin*.



A *guqin*

([Image credit](#))

Shi Yi was having fun and had utterly forgotten about him.

“This time’s strings, the tension is a little too light,” she informed the girl at the end. “Last time’s were better.”

“I think so, too.” Even though the girl was young, she was very serious about *guqin*. “I’ll change it again tomorrow.”

Shi Yi burst out in a laugh. “You little wastrel, remember the brand of the ones you are used to using, and then don’t change to a different one.”

After toiling for twenty-odd minutes or so, she really was feeling hungry now.

She saw her little neighbor out the door and immediately went into the kitchen.

Soon, the aroma of steak filled the entire room. From the corner of her eye, she saw him standing at the doorway to the kitchen, and she asked, “How do you like your steak done? Tell me quick. It’s almost at medium already.”

“Medium is good.”

Shi Yi shut off the stove.

He handed her a plate, and with tongs, she put the steaks on it and poured a sauce over them.

“When you were playing just now, I thought of a poem.”

“Huh?” She looked at him.

“Thaws the glistening cold before the Twelve Gates. The twenty-three strings rouse even the Purple Emperor.”

She broke into giggles. “My Eldest Young Master, that line is describing the *konghou*.”

He chuckled and replied in a low voice, “It’s the concept, the mood. I’m borrowing the line to compliment you. Li He^[4]... should not have objections to it.”

“True. He’s gone through the cycle of reincarnation hundreds and thousands of times already by now. How could he even remember that he once wrote such a poem?”

Smiling, he asked, “Under whom did you study the *guqin*?”

She was dazed momentarily but quickly, also smiled. “I’m a self-made phenomenon.”

Zhousheng Chen found this unfathomable, although he could not remember that she had ever formally studied the *guqin*.

“Hmm...” Holding the plate of potatoes strips in her hand, she set her forearms lightly on his shoulders. “Yup. I watched some instructional videos.”

“Very...”

“Nice-sounding?”

He gave a laugh. “Extremely.”

“Extremely nice-sounding?”

“Yes.”

With a smile, she suggested, “In a couple days, I’ll go buy a better *guqin* and practice a few times. Then, I’ll play again for you.” Seeing that the oil had heated, she hurried him out of the kitchen. “Bring the steak out and wait while I fry the potatoes. I’ll be ready soon.”

He took the steak out of the kitchen.

She, however, was reflecting on what he had said.

Thaws the glistening cold before the Twelve Gates. The twenty-three strings rouse even the Purple Emperor.

A konghou tune.

It had melted away the gleaming ice before the twelve gates of Chang’an and also roused the attention of the emperors of both Heaven and earth.

How wondrous it must have been in order to bring about such a sigh of amazement. She reflected upon the tunes he had once taught her. To produce music that could shift even the twelve gates. Only he... could ever do so.

“Those potatoes really cannot be fried anymore.” Zhousheng Chen crooked his finger and rapped her lightly on her forehead while also turning off the stove burner for her.

Shi Yi let out a cry of surprise. Oh, that poor pot of potatoes...

Overfried. All completely burnt.

This meal was really turning out to be plagued with calamities, but fortunately, the steak was still good. Feeling dreadful and apologetic, Shi Yi was about to pull out several fruits to make a salad in compensation. Zhousheng Chen immediately stopped her. “Don’t bother going to the trouble.”

She was about to say something, but the ringing of their home telephone was unexpectedly heard.

So late?

It was definitely not her parents.

Zhousheng Chen quickly strode over and listened only very briefly to what was said on the other end, hardly saying a word himself. When he hung up, the relaxed expression from a moment ago had been utterly swept away. Shi Yi was certain that something serious must have arisen. Sure enough, he informed her that Wenxing was undergoing emergency treatment.

Shi Yi was very alarmed by this. Zhousheng Chen had told her that the night she fell ill, Wenxing had also had to receive emergency treatment.

But when they saw her a few days ago, her condition had been fine. Why suddenly...

Without asking further, she hurriedly changed together with him and headed directly to the hospital. She did not know the reason why, but she could detect that his current mood was unusually bad right now and even contained a slight sense of suppressed anger that was rarely ever present.

By the time the two of them stepped out of the elevator, there were already more than a dozen people in the corridor.

Zhou Wenchuan and Wang Man were standing outside of the hospital room, looking through the glass at Wenxing inside, and the remaining people were scattered in the various corners of the corridor. As Zhousheng Chen strode out from the elevator, those people straightened up and bowed to him slightly.

"Eldest Brother." Zhou Wenchuan strolled over and nodded his head at Shi Yi in acknowledgement.

Zhousheng Chen uncharacteristically remained silent and merely removed his glasses, folded them up, and placed them in his pants pocket. Finding this rather odd, Shi Yi turned her head to the side to look at him...

In that instant, she saw, with her own eyes, him grab Zhou Wenchuan by the

collar while his right hand clenched into a fist and hurtled fiercely into Zhou Wenchuan's face.

He had used all his strength and even the sound of impact with bone could be heard.

The next second, he had already loosened his grip on Zhou Wenchuan's collar and quickly followed up with another punch.

His actions were calm. His eyes were not.

Shi Yi was stunned. She could only watch as, right before her, Zhou Wenchuan lost his center of balance and slammed into the snow-white wall. Instantly, bright red blood flowed from his nose. Zhousheng Chen was about to take another step at him, but with a cry of alarm, Wang Man threw herself on top of Zhou Wenchuan, using her body to shield him behind her. With great fear, she stared at Zhousheng Chen.

"Eldest Young Master..."

It was not only Wang Man who was terrified. Shi Yi and everyone else dared not move either.

They did not know what was going on, why Zhousheng Chen was like this.

His back was straight as he looked in silence at Zhou Wenchuan. Shi Yi could not see the expression on his face and had only a view his back and his shadow that was being cast by the lights onto Zhou Wenchuan and Wang Man.

"You had best pray that Wenxing is fine this time." Zhousheng Chen's voice was icy, and then, he turned and ordered the attendants, "Take Second Young Master to see a doctor."

Someone came over and supported Zhou Wenchuan away. Very shortly, a doctor was called over to check on him and dress his injuries.

The doctors had not expected that this person, who had been fine a moment ago when he came for a hospital visitation, would, in the blink of an eye, end up in this shape. Furthermore, the injuries he sustained from the beating were not minor, either. But this entire floor was a VIP patient room reserved for this family, so they really could not probe or ask questions. They swiftly contacted

the people in the examination room downstairs and quietly explained that they were going to perform a head and brain examination.

Zhousheng Chen indicated to Shi Yi to come close to his side.

Walking over, she gently took his arm.

The entire corridor had gradually quieted. Some doctors came over and handed him a report. Zhousheng Chen took it, and with a slight furrow in his brows, he pulled his glasses back out from his pocket, put them on, and listened to them speak as he flipped through the pages of the report.

Originally, Wenxing's health had been recuperating relatively well and the only issue was that she was not meeting the pre-operative criteria. However, for reasons unknown, when she met with Zhou Wenchuan today, the two had gotten into a severe argument in her closed hospital room, and then Wenxing's body completely gave. In only two or three hours, her health had deteriorated in the direction of the worst possible outcome...

From time to time, he would look at Wenxing through the glass.

Shi Yi stayed with him, gazing at the unconscious Wenxing and occasionally glancing at him from the corner of her eye.

And so, they stood like this, unmoving, simply watching for more than one hour.

An hour later, Zhousheng Chen's mother also arrived at the hospital, and someone quickly informed her of the current situation. She had not yet recovered from her shock and bewilderment when a doctor approached her and very politely, in a low and inquiring tone, said, "Madam Zhou, there are some government authorities here to see Second Young Master."

"Authorities?" Zhousheng Chen's mother grew even more astounded.

"Let him handle it himself," Zhousheng Chen abruptly spoke up.

His voice was clear and even cool.

"Zhousheng Chen..." Zhousheng Chen's mother gaped at him disbelievingly.

“Let him handle it himself,” he repeated.

His mother frowned, “He is your younger brother.”

“I only have a younger sister, and currently, her life is on the line.”

His mother glanced over at Shi Yi, wanting to say something, but then holding it back. “Come with me into a room.”

It was evident that she did not want Shi Yi to hear any quarrels between her and her son.

Zhousheng Chen did not refuse her request.

In the room at the end of the corridor, they spoke for a full half an hour.

She sat on the bench outside of Wenxing’s hospital room. Recalling the scene earlier on, her fingers closed to form two fists.

Wenxing, you have to pull through.

Zhousheng Chen stepped out of the room, and his mother also came out as well. Shi Yi gave a slight nod to his mother, then followed closely behind Zhousheng Chen and left with him. Sure enough, when they strode out of the elevator, they saw Zhou Wenchuan, with half his face swollen, standing in the main entrance hall of the first level, being questioned by two men dressed in black suits. Her gaze quickly swept over in that direction, and she was surprised to see that Du Feng was there as well.

Du Feng was standing by the main entranceway, speaking in a low voice into his mobile phone.

When he noticed Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi, he paused very briefly, and his gaze fell on Zhousheng Chen. Zhousheng Chen merely glanced impassively at him before placing his arms around Shi Yi’s shoulders, leading her into their vehicle, and leaving the premises.

The vehicle turned a corner and drove out onto the brightly lit road.

Shi Yi watched him close the soundproof glass partition and lift up the armrest

that had been separating them. "Let me hold you." Before he had finished speaking, he had already pulled her into his arms. Shi Yi submissively allowed him to hold her in his embrace, and she also wrapped her arms around him.

"What happened?" Her voice was very soft.

When he replied, he also spoke quietly. "All this time, Wenxing's pre-operative checks did not pass because Wenchuan had tampered with them."

Her heartbeat suddenly slowed.

She gently blew out a breath, trying her best to keep her voice steady. "Why..."

"To buy time," he stated. "After our wedding, I will officially take over all matters of the Zhou family. He needed the wedding to be deferred... And it would be best if it was deferred indefinitely."

Zhousheng Chen did not say too much in his explanation. Slowly, he let go of her and leaned himself back into the seat.

Shi Yi did not probe much further.

For example, she did not ask about the issues between Zhousheng Chen and Zhou Wenchuan.

She surmised, those things must involve too many secrets of the Zhou family. If even Wenxing's health could be ignored, there must be other things that were even more dreadful, alarming, and intolerable. Life was fragile to begin with, unable already to withstand natural disasters or sickness and disease, but in the Zhou family, one also had to guard against intentionally created calamities...

And there was Du Feng, that man whom Hong Xiaoyu was anxiously longing to marry.

She remembered that when she had first met Du Feng, she had had a very peculiar intuition about him. Later, perhaps because Zhousheng Chen had been with her, during the dinner with this person, the conversations and laughter had seemed normal, and gradually, she had begun to disregard that initial feeling.

It seemed as if every person surrounding him was like this, that they only needed to turn around and then they would become a completely different person.

By the time they arrived home, it was already deep into the hours of the night.

Stepping out of their elevator lobby, Shi Yi's head was lowered as she pulled out her keys. Zhousheng Chen, however, halted his steps slightly. Puzzled, she lifted her head only to see Mei Xing, dressed in casual attire, standing beside the window in the hallway.

[1] 古琴 “guqin” where “gu” means old or ancient. To recap, the *guqin* was considered the instrument of the scholarly. It was one of the first string instruments in Chinese history, in existence for more than 3000 years, even in the time of Confucious.

[2] 十二门前融冷光，二十三丝动紫皇。 This is a line from the poem, 李凭箜篌引 “Li Ping Playing the *Konghou*,” written by Tang dynasty poet, 李贺 Li He.

[3] 箜篌 “kong hou.” The *konghou* is an ancient Chinese harp that been mentioned in texts as far back as > 2500 years ago. The instrument actually became virtually extinct around the time of the Ming dynasty. In the twentieth century, the *konghou* was revived but modified so that it now resembles a Western harp. The pictures below are one example of what an ancient *konghou* looked like, but there are actually a couple other shapes. (Geeky moment, but I did count and that picture on the right has 23 strings, like the poem describes...)



Example of a traditional konghou. (Image credit: [left](#) and [right](#))

[4] 李贺 Li He was a famous poet who lived in the mid Tang dynasty. “Li Ping Playing the Konghou,” from which this line is taken, is one of his more well

known poems.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
48 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 15.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 15.3

[September 5, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [59 Comments](#)



Sometimes, wisdom is knowing when something just is not yours to have...

Chapter 15.3 – To Leave Painted Only Half of One's Face (3)

An explanation was not needed because a visit so late in the night, without question, could only be about Wenxing.

Mei Xing did not belong to the Zhou family. After this incident, Zhousheng Chen's mother naturally wanted to prevent anyone from getting close to Wenxing. Hence, he had received the news but was unable to see her, and finally, he had no other option but to seek out Zhousheng Chen.

The two men were having their discussion in the living room while Shi Yi made tea for them.

Then, closing the door behind her, she stayed alone in the study and read.

It was relatively quiet until, all of a sudden, the noise of something shattering rang out.

Startled, Shi Yi yanked open the door. Turning toward the sound made by the opening door, Mei Xing glanced at her and gave a very apologetic smile. He then shifted his eyes back to Zhousheng Chen, forcing himself to keep his emotions under control. His voice was much lower as he said, "My apologies. I got too worked up a moment ago."

Zhousheng Chen shook his head. "It's alright. I was much more worked up than that when I was at the hospital."

The two of them simultaneously bent down to pick up the broken glass.

"Don't pick it up with your hands." Shi Yi hurriedly stopped them and then, from the kitchen, brought over a clean dishtowel. Zhousheng Chen took it, picked up each of the pieces, and wrapped them carefully in the towel before handing it back to her.

"Should I make a new cup of tea for you?" she asked Mei Xing.

"No, it's getting late." Mei Xing smiled, rose from the sofa, and bid them farewell.

After seeing their guest out the door, she picked up his cup of tea and brought it to the kitchen to wash.

The whole time, the living room maintained a state of quiet. Finding this rather odd, she hurriedly finished tidying and stepped back out, where she saw him still silently sitting on the sofa, folding a piece of paper in half, then in half again, and so on, carrying this pattern on repeatedly.

The paper was getting smaller and smaller with each fold until it was so small it could no longer be folded in half anymore.

Hearing the sound of her footsteps, he lifted his eyes to look at her and suddenly chuckled, "At first, everyone believed that a single piece of paper could only be folded in half eight times when done in real life. Later, it was argued and proven that, if you use a machine, you could fold it nine times."

"And then?" She predicted that someone else must have overturned this conclusion.

“And then, someone later calculated it out that it was twelve times.[\[1\]](#)”

“Calculated it out?”

With an “mm,” he explained, “This is actually a math problem.”

“Really?” Shi Yi crouched down in front of him, taking the paper from his hands. “People who study math are so weird. They’d take something like paper folding and use it for calculations, too?”

“Is it weird?” He was smiling. “You never learned this in primary school?”

“Primary school?” Shi Yi was even more astonished.

She tried hard to recall. She should... not have learned it, right?

Had she? How was a math problem like this supposed to be solved?

Intent in her thinking, her eyes were fixated upon that piece of paper that had been folded into a little pile.

“It’s not true.”

“Huh?” She stared blankly at him.

“What I said at the end was not true.” He gave a little laugh. “You could not possibly have learned this in primary school.”

Shi Yi finally realized that he had been joking with her. Zhousheng Chen had already risen and stepped into the bathroom and was now turning on the water to bathe. It was not often that he was in the mood to soak in the bathtub. She grabbed some clean clothes for him, and when she brought it to the bathroom, she saw he was removing his pants.

Perhaps because Zhousheng Chen’s mother was very tall, the three siblings were not short in stature either.

Standing there beside the tub, his legs were long, lean, and straight, and as a result of his cultured upbringing since childhood, his standing and sitting postures, including the one right now where he was bent slightly at the waist to test the water temperature, with that curvature in his lower back... were all very good.

Shi Yi placed the clothing into a basket.

After he was sitting and leaning back in the bathtub, she walked over quietly said, "I'll help you bathe."

"Alright."

Amid the faint steam of the room, she poured some shampoo into her palm and began massaging his hair. "Don't open your eyes." Zhousheng Chen was very obedient, allowing her to position and direct him until, at the end, she folded up a warm towel, placed it under his neck as a cushion, and, holding the showerhead in her hand, carefully washed out his hair.

His hair was very soft following the rinsing.

After toweling it dry somewhat, he sat up straight. Some shorter hairs slipped down in front of his forehead, messily obscuring his eyes.

"Feels good, doesn't it?" She amused herself by stretching out a hand to brush away the hairs falling into his eyes.

Those eyes were still and unperturbed,

She lowered her head and placed a kiss on his browbone. "I know you're sad, but I don't know how to console you."

Gently, he took her chin between his fingers, guiding her head down a little lower. "Before, when you were sad, what would you do?"

Shi Yi dug through her memory for a moment and then laughed, "I'd read 'Explaining Words and Analyzing Characters^[2]' because I didn't need to think when reading it."

He also chuckled, "Last time, when I asked you whether you had read 'Explaining Words and Analyzing Characters' and you told me that you had read some, I was quite amused. Why do you like...um..." he paused, searching for the right words before continuing, "this 'dictionary' of the ancient times?"

She laughed. "I have so much time anyways. I'll flip through any book that's available."

She had used ten years in that huge library tower and still only managed to read two levels of that collection of books.

For the remainder, she could only remember some of the titles.

His hair in front slipped down again.

In those eyes, besides the glow of light, there was only her.

Her hand slid down along his hair, over his face, and to his shoulders and continued to glide down. At last, it scooped up a handful of warm water and poured it gently over him before going back to lightly knead his shoulders. Her hands were hot. His body was also hot. After massaging him for only a short while, his hand reached to grab her wrist. "Shi Yi?"

"Hmm?" She gazed at him. Her eyes, too, only held him.

Zhousheng Chen stretched out his arms, lifting her entire body up and into the bathtub so that she lay on top of him.

Shi Yi's nightgown was completely soaked. His hand very easily slipped past all the obstructions and gently entered her body, all the while very patiently tantalizing her.

For an entire hour, they lingered in the water.

In the end, he had utterly drained her, yet still he did not join his body with hers. Finally, he carried her directly out of the bathtub. After the two of them had dried off and were lying together on the bed, Zhousheng Chen at last said quietly, "I'm sorry. Today... I was not really in the mood."

Shi Yi did not even utter a sound. Exhausted, she tangled her legs with his and, lying on her side, wrapped her arms around his waist.

Soon, she was about drift off to sleep, but she struggled herself dazedly out of her dreams for just a moment and called his name. "Zhousheng Chen."

He patted her hand and made a sound in acknowledgement.

"I love you."

With an "mm," he answered, "I know. Go to sleep now."

Her mind at ease now, she fell deep into slumber.

In a muddled, half-asleep state, she felt something cool on her wrist, as if he had slipped something onto it.

The following day, she awoke very early. Shi Yi discovered that last night, he had actually taken the eighteen prayer beads that she had carefully stored away and put it on her. She had already been wearing the safety and peace pendant he had given her, and now, there was the circle of eighteen prayer beads as well. Although Zhousheng Chen had not said anything, she could still sense that he was afraid that something truly would happen to her.

With all these unexpected mishaps and obstacles, she, too, was starting to fear.

Fear that a single misstep would result in something terrible happening.

When she and Zhousheng Chen arrived at the hospital, the people who had been on the main level the previous night were no longer to be found. However, someone had been stationed at every exit, and these people were responsible for monitoring Zhou Wenchuan's every movement. Zhousheng Chen personally brought Mei Xing in with him, and therefore, no one dared to stop them this time. After all, every person of the Zhou family knew the relationship this this Young Master Mei had with the Zhou family.

They were sitting in the restaurant for this particular level.

Windows that extended to the floor provided a clear view of what was outside.

They sat on the south side while Zhou Wenchuan and Wang Man sat on the other side of the restaurant.

It was an extremely uncanny scene.

However, aside from Shi Yi, everyone seemed to think that this was very normal. She mused in her mind, perhaps for these sorts of families and the internal power struggles that occurred in them, after victory and defeat had been determined, the victor would still organize a dignified and respectable funeral for the other party.

After sitting for a little while, Zhousheng Chen left temporarily to go read through the report from today.

Only she and Mei Xing remained.

Shi Yi threw a casual glance down out the window, and there, she saw Du Feng again.

This person... who was he really? She had never asked Zhousheng Chen because, to some extent, she felt guilty that she had led this “trouble” into the Zhou family. Mei Xing also noticed him, and as he followed her gaze, he said casually, “Isn’t that the Interpol agent who is seeing your friend.”

“Interpol agent?”

“Those people are responsible for investigating terrorist activities, drug production and trafficking, arms smuggling...” Mei Xing paused for a moment, seemingly in contemplation. “After the gun battle in Bremen, he started to investigate the Zhou family.”

Too much information received in too short a period of time.

In her mind, Shi Yi rapidly linked everything that had happened since her return from Germany.

Therefore, the gun fight in Bremen was not a coincidence. So... it was very likely that Zhou Wenchuan was behind it. And then, after she returned to the country, that Du Feng had appeared. Did Zhousheng Chen know about this? He must have known. Even Mei Xing clearly knew everything, how could he not know about the identity of this Interpol officer?

She glanced down at the outline of Du Feng’s back on the first floor and somewhat dazedly asked, “So right now, he’s... he’s investigating Zhou Wenchuan?”

Mei Xing did not provide a direct response. With an indifferent smile, he said, “The second young master of the Zhou family does indeed deserve a solid investigation. I believe... there will be some results soon.”

Zhousheng Chen was still talking to the doctors, and her heart was feeling agitated, so she did not continue the conversation.

Compared to what was going on with Zhou Wenchuan, she was more worried about whether Wenxing’s health would pull through...

“Last night...” There was a deep look in Mei Xing’s eyes as he watched her.

“Huh?” Shi Yi did not really understand and stared back at him.

“I’m incredibly sorry I broke your teacup.”

Realizing what he meant, she gave a little laugh. “It’s no big deal.”

It was not an expensive cup of any sort, and she did not know why he would suddenly bring it up.

He, too, chuckled. “Will you let me treat you to a cup of tea?”

Without waiting for Shi Yi’s answer, he had already risen to go ask the restaurant servers for two cups of hot, Hong Kong-style milk tea.

He personally carried the tea back and set it in front of her.

“Thank you,” Shi Yi smiled. “I thought you would treat me to a cup of traditional Chinese tea.”

“The Chinese tea here... shouldn’t be as good as the ones you make.”

When he spoke, his voice was low and deep and seemed to carry a slight joking feel, but it also seemed to have been spoken from the bottom of his heart.

Shi Yi felt a little awkward and searched for a topic to help ease past this moment. “Wenxing...”

In a quiet voice, Mei Xing interrupted her, “If Wenxing can pull through this, I will take her and we will leave China to settle in another country.” He stated, “I will take care of her for the rest of her life.”

“She will,” Shi Yi smiled and said. “When she hears you say that, she will get better for sure.”

“But first, I need to help Zhousheng Chen finish the things he wants to do.” With a wry smile, he shook his head. “I don’t know what I owe him from the previous life that I would so willingly, and without the slightest hesitation, stay by his side to do this type of arduous but thankless work.”

The tone of his words had switched so quickly. This time, it really was in jest.

Shi Yi burst out in a laugh. “The previous life, huh? There are too many people who were indebted to him.”

Mei Xing could not contain his chuckles. “Really? And you know this?”

“It’s true. I know it,” Shi Yi smiled as she also used a joking tone to tell him this. Such a smile...

Mei Xing seemed somewhat in a trance, and Shi Yi puzzledly looked at him.

He suddenly told her in a quiet voice, “Shi Yi, don’t smile at me. I’m genuinely scared that I would try to contend with him [for you].”

She froze in surprise.

The look in Mei Xing’s eyes as he gazed at her in this moment reminded Shi Yi of the riddle Wenxing had mentioned that time in the old Zhou family manor, the one that he had said he was using to select a wife..... Very quickly, she told Mei Xing in a serious voice, “Alright, I will remember that.”

As he raised his cup and drank his own milk tea, an open, forthright smile came onto Mei Xing’s face that carried a sense of sadness from having spoken out the feelings that had been hidden in the heart.

Once, by way of chance, she had made tea for him. He stored the memory in his heart and also returned the same back to her.

Unknown it was how or when these feelings had taken root. But, it was to love and never to have.

For their fated affinity was no more than a single cup of tea.

[\[1\] Here](#) is one site that describes the calculation, if you are interested.

[\[2\] 说文解字](#)”Shuo Wen Jie Zi.” I explained this once before in footnote [1] of Chapter 12.3, but just to recap, this book dates back to approximately the 2nd century and describes the etymologies of Chinese characters and how they came about.

In his previous life, for her, he had committed a horrible injustice against an innocent, righteous man and ultimately, had lost the one “her” that he had ever wanted. But perhaps because that life had not been kind to him, this life, he was not severely punished. Instead, he gets to become the good friend of the reincarnated form of the man he had wronged. However, “前世因, 今世果” the seeds of the previous life yields the fruits of this life.” A debt owed in the previous life is still one that needs to be repaid in this life, and though he does not understand why, he feels compelled to stay by his friend’s side, to support him in everything he does.

In that last life, he formed his final wish into a question: “Will you let me have the chance to truly see you, in person?” He asked not for the fate to be with her this life, only to see her in person. Perhaps Heaven was being kind on the man who, although he had made mistakes, had suffered so much in that life and granted him his wish. He did see her and was allowed to share a cup of tea with her. With that wish fulfilled, I feel like the crown prince of the previous life can finally move on in this life.

I really like and appreciate Mei Xing. In this life, he is a 君子 “junzi” or “gentleman,” one who knew to walk away and keep their fate as simple as a sole cup of tea. Such an interesting character. As a man in his mid-thirties and intimately connected, not just to Zhousheng Chen but to the Zhou family, he must be more than aware of what goes on. To be longtime friends of the Zhou family, the Mei family’s background is probably not sparkly clean either. Had he been like Zhousheng Chen, removing himself from the entire setting?

Anyhow, Mo Bao Fei Bao just started writing her latest novel, which is a continuation of this series. There’s a couple characters I hope make it into the story, Mei Xing being one of them, even if they just have cameo roles. That’s wishful thinking for now.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

49 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 16.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 16.1

[September 9, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [74 Comments](#)



I wish I had something to say here, but... Read, and you will understand.

Chapter 16.1 – The Roles People Play (1)

There were doctors continuously coming and going from the room, and Zhousheng Chen had also stepped inside.

She felt even more panicked.

She forced herself to continue looking — at the sun shining high and bright, at the mottled shade cast by the trees, at the handful of Interpol agents and Zhou family members downstairs. After a while, she reached unsettledly for her milk tea, and the tassel on the eighteen prayer beads around her wrist swayed with her motion, the rose-colored tourmaline decoration on the string of the tassel bumping against the glass of the cup and producing a light, clinking sound.

For some reason, she seemed to sense that someone was watching her.

She sought out that uncomfortable gaze. It was Zhou Wenchuan.

However, when she located him, he had already shifted his gaze away and had gently stretched out his hand to stroke Wang Man's abdomen.

Wang Man lowered her eyes to watch him, lightly placing her hand over his as both their hands covered the position where the baby was. The Wang family was not the large, wealthy family that the Zhou family was, but it had always been secure and stable. For Zhou Wenchuan, she had conceded again and again, but still she could not understand why matters were becoming more and more complicated... Those authorities downstairs had gradually narrowed their investigation down to him.

In the immense Zhou family, there were far more people than simply him, alone, who were involved in shady business. Yet, it was him, alone, who was embroiled in real troubles...

The door to Wenxing's hospital room abruptly opened...

A middle-aged doctor strode out and, with an extremely grave expression, directed a nurse to call several other doctors. Everyone outside of the room stood up anxiously, watching the people dash in and out.

From early this morning up to now, there had already been three life-threatening instances. This was the fourth...

After a dozen or so minutes, Zhousheng Chen emerged from inside and cast a glance in the direction of Mei Xing and Shi Yi.

Shi Yi and Mei Xing walked up to him, and she gently reached out and took hold of his hand. He returned her grasp and said, "Wenxing wants to see the two of you one last time."

Her throat clenched and tears nearly spilled over from her eyes.

Originally, this had been a sterile room, but it was apparent that later, the people who entered were no longer required to don isolation gowns. They passed through two consecutive automatic doors and stepped inside. Her legs unable to hold her up anymore, Zhousheng Chen's mother was sitting on one side of the room, continually wiping her tears with a handkerchief. Wenxing lay upon the bed, her eyes open and fixed on Shi Yi and Mei Xing.

The two walked over to her.

Wenxing first took Shi Yi's hand in hers, and with great difficulty, she wrote several words in her palm: mobile phone, recording, listen.

Shi Yi nodded, then turned to Zhousheng Chen. "Give me Wenxing's mobile phone."

Zhousheng Chen immediately strode out and very soon returned with a bag. From within, he pulled out the phone and handed it to Shi Yi. Seeing that Shi Yi had the phone in her hands, Wenxing slowly moved her gaze away to look at Mei Xing.

She no longer had the strength to speak. Inside the oxygen mask, a faint white mist could be seen forming recurrently.

Very faint. Even breathing required so much effort.

She only gazed at Mei Xing, her eyes unblinking.

Mei Xing crouched down to accommodate her eye level so she could look more comfortably.

Shi Yi could not bear to watch any longer, and lowering her head, she turned on the phone and slipped on a pair of earphones.

In the voice memo list, there was a file named, "11."

She knew it must be this one and tapped to open it. It was Wenxing's voice:

Sister-in-Law, I'm sorry.

I'm a selfish person. If I'm to die, I'll definitely leave all my last minutes for Mei Xing. I need to remember him so that next life, I can find him. That's why I made this recording very early on, to give to you.

This recording... I don't know where to start.

From really young, I grew up outside of the country, so I'm not really close to the people in my family. The only ones who were truly good to me were my two older brothers. Of course, the one who treated me best is, for sure, Big Brother. But, since I was a kid, I've had this sense that Mom doesn't really like Big Brother.

Later, as I grew up, I found out a secret.

In the recording, there was the sound of Wenxing's little laugh. After a slight

pause, she continued speaking:

But, I can't tell you the secret. I feel like anybody who knows it will have bad luck. Like me. Like Second Brother.

Shi Yi listened, very baffled.

However, she could sense that the key points Wenxing wanted to say were coming later.

I seem to have said a bunch of useless things and started to waste time.

Shi Yi, actually... I want to tell you, I'm very, very sorry.

Those few days you were in Wuzhen, my second brother wanted to do some bad things to you... I'm guessing Big Brother must not have told you this. If he hadn't been prepared for it, you might have been hurt. After it happened, lots of people found out about it right away, but everyone chose to keep quiet.

Including me. I admit, the people in my family are all really selfish, and we just protect people in our own family.

Later on, before Big Brother could come back, only Xiao Ren went to Wuzhen... You know that in the Zhou family, Xiao Ren is very special, so him there with you meant no one dared get close to you guys anymore... I admit, I can't compare with Xiao Ren.

And then later, you came to stay in our house.

I came back for my sickness..... And then..... You fell into the water. And you were poisoned and unconscious. None of those were accidents.

I don't know how much you've guessed. Who could get close to you like that, or what was the reason for doing all those things? Shi Yi, I really hope that you can guess because that way, my guilt would lessen, even just by a little bit...

The only people that Big Brother trusts completely are me and Mei Xing, right?

Actually, that's not quite right. Big Brother even suspected Mei Xing for a bit...

Shi Yi, you're so smart. I've said so much, you should be able to guess who it is, right?

Shi Yi raised her head and looked at Wenxing.

Her recording was still sounding in Shi Yi's ears, but now, her eyes only held Mei Xing.

Perhaps, only now, in this time, could she so brazenly use such a way to have Mei Xing stay with her.

I... never intended to hurt you, but I still ended up hurting you. Many times.

I caused you to fall into the water, and I went in to save you.

I poisoned you, but I also put myself into a situation where I needed to be revived.

I was trying to use this way — this way where the two people Big Brother cared the most about were getting hurt — to make Big Brother scared that he'd lose you and drag me into the mess. To make him give up... this family, and to leave this place. Shi Yi, I'm an extremely selfish person. In the critical moments, I can only be concerned about my own family. I don't want to watch them fight it out until one has to die in order for the other to live.

So, all the consequences, I brought onto myself.

You're a Buddhist, right? Karma. Reincarnation. Just deserts for this life.

Shi Yi, I'm sorry. If there's a next life, I'll make it up to you, for sure.

The recording ended there.

Shi Yi's hand was clenching the phone. She was unable to describe what she was feeling.

Many things she had not known now all floated to the surface, and behind all of these were also many complicated relationships and entanglements. It could be because the agony of drowning and intense abdominal pain were in the past now, or maybe because she knew that after death, there was indeed another journey of life awaiting, but she did not feel a great resentment.

Her mind was rather blank, and she did not know what she should be thinking. All she felt was grief.

Amid the oppressive quiet, her tears, without any warning, began to fall, and she could not stop them anymore.

Wenxing's eyes blinked once, very faintly.

She had been gazing for too long. She was tired.

Her eyes were stinging very badly, and she really wanted to close them to rest for just a moment...

She seemed to want to smile at Mei Xing, but she did not know whether, after more than a dozen hours of emergency resuscitation, she now looked haggard and in a sorry state or her face looked hideous...

Ever so slightly, she moved her finger.

Mei Xing seemed to understand what she wanted and placed his cheek against her cheek.

He remembered, when she was little, she would sit on his lap and would like to nuzzle her cheek against his like this, then grin at him with blinking eyes. If he wanted to set her back down, she would immediately cover her chest with her hand and cry, "Don't put me down, don't put me down! I'll be unhappy. And once I'm unhappy, my heart will hurt. Ow! My heart hurts..."

Whether it had been true or false, either way, a little girl's affections had evolved into such deep feelings.

Wenxing was exhausted from watching him, and without warning, her eyes closed... In that stifling silence, Mei Xing slowly brought his forehead down and pressed it into Wenxing's palm.

Sobs came over Shi Yi almost uncontrollably, and she raised her hand, biting down on it with all her might to prevent herself from weeping out loud...

The monitoring equipment in the hospital room silently declared that she was gone.

She truly did as she had said. She had selfishly left all her remaining strength for Mei Xing.

Zhou Wenchuan, who had not been allowed to enter the room, was standing outside the door, and when he saw everyone's reactions, he realized the situation had reached the worst possible outcome... His hands balled tightly into fists, and his eyes instantly grew red as he shoved away the people who had been blocking him.

He charged in past the first automatic door.

But the second door was still tightly shut. He pummeled the glass, but the people inside the room seemed as if they did not hear anything. In the end, he gave one last fierce pound. Zhousheng Chen finally turned around and cast a look at him.

A very cold gaze. One never seen before.

In that instant, Zhou Wenchuan actually felt fear. While he was still frozen where he was, Zhousheng Chen had already motioned to someone to open the door, stepped out, and seized him by the collar, dragging him into the hospital room where he gave him a vicious kick in the leg.

Zhou Wenchuan buckled to his knees with a thump as they hit the floor. A few seconds later, the black muzzle of a gun was shoved up against the back of his head.

The hand holding the gun belonged to Zhousheng Chen.

He did not speak a word and simply lowered his eyes to look down emotionlessly at Zhou Wenchuan.

His eyes, because of the painful emotions, were frighteningly red.

“Zhousheng Chen...” In shock, Zhousheng Chen’s mother pushed herself up on the arm of the chair until she was standing. “Zhousheng Chen... Put down the gun. I asked the doctor... The harm caused by those drugs was not very significant. Your brother did not want this...”

Wang Man had also thrown herself at Zhousheng Chen’s feet and was kneeling before him. Sobs wracked her so fiercely she nearly fainted as, again and again, she brought her forehead to the floor and cried, “Eldest Young Master!”

Zhousheng Chen showed no response, his finger still on the trigger.

The sound of her weeping cut off abruptly. She clutched tightly to Zhousheng Chen’s pants, and gradually her body curled up into a ball. A large amount of blood could be seen soaking through her dress. “Eldest Young Master... I beg you...” Her entire face was contorted in pain. This sudden miscarriage shocked everyone.

Zhou Wenchuan suddenly whipped around, pulled her into his arms, and lifted her entire body up.

With the muzzle of Zhousheng Chen’s gun still pressed up against him, he rose to his feet.

The two brothers locked gazes, their eyes both the same scarlet color.

“Xiao Chen [Little Chen]...” Zhousheng Chen’s mother hand was grasping tightly at her own chest, and her tears began to stream forth. “Mom’s begging you, just this once. Mom just lost a daughter. You can’t make her lose a son now, too...”

Additional Comments:

Intense?

When I used to read this scene before I had translated it, it was a sad scene, one that I would sigh regretfully over. I had not thought, though, that it would

stir my emotions too much such that it would be difficult to translate. Then, as I was first translating Wenxing's last words to Shi Yi, I was very carefully choosing each word, almost surgically, you could say, to best communicate Mo Bao Fei Bao's original writing. However, it just wasn't right.

And so, I took a step back and immersed myself into Wenxing's role. I spoke the words aloud first before I transferred them over to text form, as if it really was me leaving this recording. A girl who put up a happy front, who possibly could have truly been happy if she had not come from such a family. A girl desperate to put an end to the fighting between the only two people in her family who had truly treated her with genuine affection. A girl eaten away by guilt for the things she had done and the person she had hurt to accomplish what she felt she needed to do. A girl fearful of being found out because her big brother might forever hate her. A girl so overcome by hopelessness and disappointment in her family that she would harm her own life, and in the end, even give it up, just to provide an escape for the brother she loved. Disappointment, fear, desperation, hopelessness, guilt... with no end in sight, it felt. If all of it could end, perhaps she could just love and be loved. But if it was not meant to be, that girl would save her final moments for the man she loved because it was only then could she ignore everything else and blatantly love him, baggage free.

Anyways, as a result, I'm an emotional wreck right now. (Poor hubby came running over wondering why I was weeping at my computer.) When I started the prep work for this chapter, I quickly realized I would be in no state to reply to comments when I normally do, so you may have noticed I replied to all your comments from last post quite a bit earlier. Therefore... please comment away as you always do, but forgive me if, for the time being, I bow out from participating in any detailed discussions you may have or if I do not answer certain questions. I will come back to any I've missed when I've gathered myself and the emotions are less raw.

My apologies.

Cheers.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

50 of 56 Main story segments

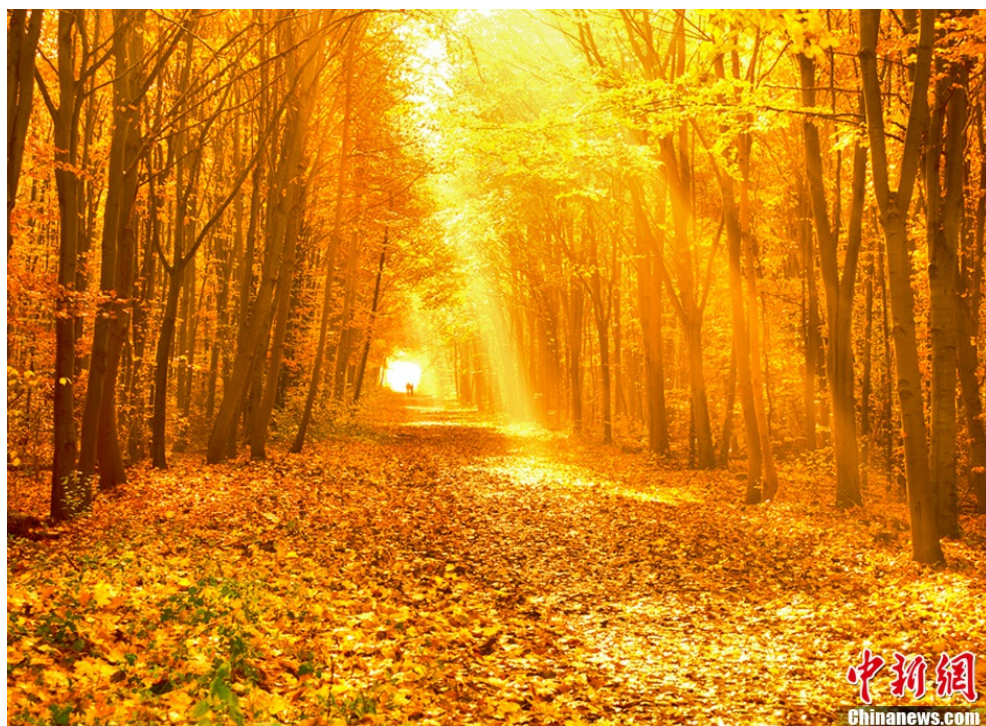
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 16.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 16.2

[September 12, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [67 Comments](#)



Not quite as bad as last post, but the emotions are still running strong in this one (mine included).

Chapter 16.2 – The Roles People Play (2)

Zhousheng Chen glanced over at the hospital bed and then shifted his gaze to Shi Yi.

She, too, was looking at him, her heart pounding. She knew, in Zhousheng Chen's current emotional state, all those things Zhou Wenchuan had once done to her... and all those things Wenxing had once done to her, he would most definitely attribute them all on Zhou Wenchuan now.

With difficulty, Shi Yi made herself breathe as she stared unblinkingly at him.

“Xiao Chen...” Pale-faced, Zhousheng Chen's mother watched him, her legs

scarcely able to hold her up. “Mom is begging you, please put the gun down, okay?... Xiao Chen...”

No one dared to speak.

Zhousheng Chen stood there, his entire body seemingly one with the gun, and he seemed to easily cause the air pressure in the room to drop to the lowest possible. Behind the thin lenses of his glasses, no traces of emotional turmoil could be seen in his eyes.

Because he was carrying Wang Man, a large part of Zhou Wenchuan’s own pants were also stained with blood. “Zhousheng Chen, you pointing a gun at me now, is that for Wenxing? Or is it for your wife? Wenxing’s gone. You can finally settle the score with me now, huh?”

Zhou Wenchuan gave a couple of laughs, and then, tears started to fall.

Wang Man was biting down hard on her own lip, and in his embrace, her facial features were contorted in agony.

He held tightly to the woman in his arms. At last, through clenched teeth, he, one word at a time, begged for mercy. “If you let me go save Wang Man, I will return and pay you back with my life.” As he spoke, he suddenly dropped to his knees. It was clear his hatred was so intense he wanted to kill, yet still, he knelt before Zhousheng Chen. “Eldest Brother, I beg you, let me go...”

“Xiao Chen...” Zhousheng Chen’s mother choked through her weeping, but she dared not take a single step forward for fear that Zhousheng Chen might do something. “Xiao Chen... The drugs your little brother gave Wenxing really weren’t the cause of her death. And as for Shi Yi... Those things that happened to Shi Yi didn’t have anything to do with your brother either... Listen to Mom. Aside from that one incident in Wuzhen, everything else was Mom’s doing. They had absolutely nothing to do with your little brother...”

A plea through choking sobs, and Wang Man’s moans of anguish.

Wenxing’s recording played over and over again in Shi Yi’s mind.

All truths would eventually be known, but it should not be by Zhousheng Chen, the one who loved Wenxing so much...

Only silence that would not dissipate permeated that moment of life and death.

After an endless standstill, Zhousheng Chen finally lowered the gun in his hand down slowly.

Without any delay, Zhou Wenchuan strode out of the room carrying Wang Man in his arms.

He and Wang Man were both persons being monitored by authorities, so under the observation of police officers, he set Wang Man down on a gurney. Immediately, doctors rushed over and pushed the gurney into the elevator, leaving that hospital floor.

In the instant the elevator doors closed, the strength seemed to go out of Zhou Wenchuan's arms. Bending over, he hugged Wang Man and tears slipped out, falling onto her. "Man Man, thank you. Once we get through this, we'll still have our chance..."

While he was speaking, he had already buried his face on Wang Man's arm.

Wang Man's face was pale from the pain, but still, she held him tightly to her. With his own hands, he had given her the drugs to induce the abortion. When life and death were separated by merely a thin line, she had needed to wager herself and her child, to gamble on Zhousheng Chen's conscience and compassion. Even if she was insignificant in all this, if she could add even the lightest of burdens on him... Tong Jiaren had already proposed to dissolve their marriage, so now, she was the only person remaining by Zhou Wenchuan's side who could support him.

She gripped his arm tightly, helping herself reduce the pain ever so slightly, and gradually slid into unconsciousness

.....

Feebly, Zhousheng Chen's mother sat down again, speaking quietly to Wenxing, who was still on the bed.

The atmosphere in the room was too suffocating. The feeling of immense

shock that had come after the feeling of immense grief was somewhat too great to bear for Shi Yi. She deleted Wenxing's recording and set the mobile phone down beside the window. Then, she walked over and quietly stood close beside Zhousheng Chen.

Outside the hospital room, Uncle Lin was meticulously attending to Wenxing's after-death arrangements.

Steadily, time slipped by, seemingly very fast, yet also very slowly.

By the time all had been arranged, Wenxing was taken from the hospital, and it was planned to bury her in Zhenjiang. When everyone left the hospital, it was already four thirty in the morning.

Right before the arrival of dawn, the darkest hour of a day.

Zhousheng Chen's mother was staying behind at the hospital to be with Zhou Wenchuan and Wang Man. As they stepped out of the hospital building, the officers standing guard on the first floor began to carry out their routine business and stepped forward to ask for and record the planned destination of each person after they left this place. Mei Xing remained silent during their entire questioning, and so, conflict broke out right then between them. Pulling aside his own colleagues, Du Feng stepped up and said, "My apologies, Mr. Zhousheng, Mr. Mei. We only need to understand where each of you is heading. It's routine procedure, that's all."

Zhousheng Chen glanced briefly at Du Feng, and then Uncle Lin immediately stepped forward to negotiate with him in low tones.

Only Uncle Lin separated Du Feng's group of people from Zhousheng Chen and the others, but throughout the entire process, there was not any form of verbal communication between the two groups. In that oppressive silence, a commotion suddenly started up behind Du Feng.

Shi Yi heard an extremely familiar voice. Hong Xiaoyu?

Du Feng also heard it at the same time she did and immediately turned around, brushing aside everyone. While gesturing to the person restraining Hong Xiaoyu to let her go, he quietly instructed the others around him, "Every

Zhou family member who leaves this place must be followed by a team of people—“

A loud smack rang out, completely cutting off Du Feng’s words.

Hong Xiaoyu had shoved aside Du Feng’s colleague and slapped Du Feng violently across the face.

Shock came over everyone present.

“Hong Xiaoyu, don’t go causing trouble, making a scene here —“ Du Feng forced himself to keep a check on his emotions, inhaling a deep breath.

The next second, Hong Xiaoyu had hurled her camera at him. “Screw you, Du Feng!”

The distance between them was too close and Du Feng was unable to dodge it. The camera slammed into his forehead, and instantly, blood began to stream down.

Hong Xiaoyu also froze in shock.

Tears sprang from her eyes, and she stared dazedly at him for three second, then turned and rushed over to Shi Yi.

All those highly-trained police officers were stunned by this scene of nonsense and forgot to restrain her. Before Shi Yi could react, she had already pulled Shi Yi into a bear hug. Even though she was still crying, in a trembling voice, she told Shi Yi nonstop, “Shi Yi, I’m sorry. I didn’t know. I didn’t know at all. I was here on assignment for a story. I knew there was trouble for the Zhou family and knew there were police... Shi Yi, Shi Yi, I didn’t know he’s a cop. I didn’t know this b*stard wanted to harm you. Shi Yi, don’t be scared. I’ve always protected you since we were kids. I won’t let him do anything to you...”

Shi Yi hugged her, repeatedly telling her, “Alright, alright. It’s okay, it’s okay.”

When Du Feng’s colleagues all heard this string of words, they at last understood the basics of the situation. But they were rather speechless about this woman who had suddenly charged out. They were clearly only doing their jobs, but this woman was taking things that were right and twisting them to

say they were wrong.

Harm the Zhou family?

Since they had begun their investigation of the Zhou family, it could truly be said that every step had been difficult. Finally, they had managed to make some progress, even chancing upon the situation where there were problems internally between the people within that family, and it was a time where they could stir up more confusion. But then, this woman who knew absolutely nothing about the situation suddenly popped out of nowhere... And from the looks of it, she was their leader's woman, too...

Someone told Du Feng to treat his wound, but Du Feng only pulled out a handkerchief and hastily pressed it against his wound. "All of you, pull that woman away! Also, once you have catalogued everyone, let them leave but have a team monitoring them."

Hong Xiaoyu was immediately dragged away by two people.

Shutting his eyes quickly, Du Feng wiped away the blood obstructing his vision. "Mr. Zhousheng, we are simply following our procedures."

Zhousheng Chen finally spoke up. "It is alright. We will do our best to work with you."

Since, after all, the main focus of Du Feng's monitoring was still Zhou Wenchuan, they were released to go very shortly. Shi Yi looked over at the people who were holding back Hong Xiaoyu. Her intuition told her that Du Feng would not truly make things difficult for her, so she followed Zhousheng Chen out of the hospital.

Worried that she might drag Hong Xiaoyu into trouble, she hurriedly sent her a text message: *I am fine. Do not concern yourself with anything related to the Zhou family. Forget about this whole incident. I will take care of myself.*

Then, she very swiftly turned off her mobile phone.

Regarding Wenxing's voice recording, Zhousheng Chen had only asked her

about it on the day of Wenxing's burial.

She did not tell him about its true content.

She had once thought she would never keep anything from Zhousheng Chen and would tell him all that she knew. But for this case, Shi Yi decided she would conceal it from him to the very end. Irrespective of how much of his mother's words Zhousheng Chen had believed, he would never suspect Wenxing, who had already departed this life. And that was sufficient enough.

She did not want to repeatedly speculate and deliberate over the actions of someone who had already passed away.

Even more so, she did not want Zhousheng Chen to have to taste another form of sorrow.

On the day of the funeral, surprisingly, the autumn sky was clear, the air was crisp, and it was a fine, sunny day.

The Zhou family burial ground was up in the mountains behind the temple where they had once gone to offer incense, and many of the family ancestors were buried there. Shi Yi stood there amongst the tombs that numbered many but were not crowded. All around, near and far, were people belonging to the Zhou family, and Mei Xing was the only outsider present.

Nobody had attempted to stop Mei Xing from being there. Each person who had experienced Wenxing's final moments knew that he was the person she most wanted to see...

Zhousheng Chen was garbed in a black suit and dress shirt, and from top to bottom he wore no other color. Shi Yi stood beside him, dressed also entirely in black, a black coat and long, black pants.

The mountains of late autumn always contained a breeze that would ceaselessly swirl up layers upon layers of fallen leaves.

Everyone was gazing at the tombstone, silently lost in his or her own thoughts.

Wenxing.

I'll tell you a secret.

In the underworld, there is a bodhisattva called Ksitigarbha, who once was incarnated as a woman. He has always been very merciful to the women who have passed on into death.

If there is a woman who has an ugly appearance and a body frail with sickness but has always strove to do good, and if she sincerely and earnestly bows down in reverence before the bodhisattva, in her next life, her appearance will be pleasing and her body will be healthy. If a woman is not ashamed that she is a woman, and if she sincerely and earnestly bows in reverence before the bodhisattva, in her next life, she will certainly be a woman with a prominent family background or perhaps even a noblewoman.

As long as there is goodness in her heart, mercy and kindness are more readily bestowed upon a woman.

Of all the things in this world, there is nothing greater than life and death.

I will not hold a grudge against someone who has already died. To die means that you have nothing to do with this life anymore.

I will never mention any of those things anymore, to allow what you once did to trouble and entrap your big brother. He loves you very much. Truly loves you very much. I cannot even speculate how much pain he would feel if he ever found out... If you truly want to make recompense to me, then watch over your big brother together with me.

Additional Comments:

Despite having read this book many times, I usually skip the previous segment and this one. Therefore, while I had made a comment somewhere that I didn't dislike Wang Man, that she was only a girl doing stupid things for love, I'm going to retract that because I forgot about this part when I made

that comment. As a mother myself, never, ever could I even fathom killing my own innocent, unborn child (5+ months in!!). And for what? To create a scene so that the cold-blooded father can get off the hook for his wrongdoings.

Actually, I was again blubbering in tears this chapter, but it was for Hong Xiaoyu. To find out that the man you wish to spend the rest of your life with had only gotten close to you because he wanted to investigate your best friend's hubby and his family... But that shock and betrayal didn't overshadow her love for her friend, and my tears started to fall when she sobbingly hugged Shi Yi and declared she would protect her like she always had. What a wonderful friend.

I appreciate Shi Yi's thoughts at the end of the chapter. When the book went to publishing, there really weren't many changes made from the original version that had been posted online, mostly word-smithing, but Shi Yi's thoughts here were changed, slightly but, I believe, made it more realistic. Aside from some subtle word changes, I've noted a few here. In the original version, Shi Yi had given her blessings/good wishes to Wenxing as she journeyed into the next life, but this was removed from the published book. Also, the two lines, "Of all the things in this world, there is nothing greater than life and death" and "I cannot even speculate how much pain he would feel if he ever found out..." were added. The sense that you got from the original was that Shi Yi had let go of her grudge to Wenxing and wished her well, wherever she may be. But, how many people can find out someone has been purposefully hurting you and still treat them like a friend? Here, Shi Yi chooses to let go of her grudge because she knows, having passed through reincarnation herself, that everything is inconsequential in the face of life and death when that person is gone. For Zhousheng Chen, not Wenxing, she will choose to forget and forever keep it all secret.

Lastly, thanks for all your comments last post. I'm much better, although this post did me in again in a couple of places.

I know many of you had commented before that you liked Wenxing, and I carefully chose to keep silent and not respond to any of those. For those of you who never suspected Wenxing, the feelings of anger and betrayal are not

surprising. During my initial read of Wenxing's death, my reaction was quite similar to many of yours, and I do understand the mixed bag of reactions you all had. I had mentioned I had felt sadness and regret... not for her, though. It was for Shi Yi and Zhousheng Chen.

What translating has made me not just cognitively understand but truly experience is that the author has carefully planned out and given everyone their own story (Tong Jiaren, the crown prince, Wenxing, etc.). A person's actions, motivations, situations, *etc.* all come with a story behind them. And though, ultimately, they are responsible for their own actions and will have to bear the consequences, their stories, to them, are deeply personal. We, as the readers, usually merely take on the role of the spectator. Allowing myself to truly try to immerse myself into Wenxing's story was so difficult, emotionally. Frankly, I think what she did was... stupid. But I also felt the desperation. Desperate people can do stupid things and now, somehow, I do understand, if not agree.

In the end, I, myself, do not hate her, but I cannot like her either. Like the crown prince of the past (and yes, I understand the crown prince's life was significantly worse), I can't like either for the decisions they made but I do feel for the horribly sad stories behind their lives.

Anyways, enough babbling. Just needed somewhere to set down those emotions.

See you next post.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

51 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 16.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 16.3

[September 16, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [40 Comments](#)



For all who were nervous, this picture should be a pretty good indication that this chapter is kinder on the heart than the previous couple. (Yeah, yeah, I know it's not autumn in the picture, but, as Zhousheng Chen said, "It's the concept, the mood!")

Chapter 16.3 – The Roles People Play (3)

The two of them did not take a vehicle for their return from the cemetery to the old manor.

Walking up the mountain, along the road, about an hour later, they saw the familiar sight of tall, decorated stone archways.

The trees here were even more towering, and fallen leaves blanketed the entire road.

Without the dense covering of leaves, the sun easily passed through the high branches and fell upon the ground, scattering shadows outwards.

“Your mother said... it is your grandmother’s ninetieth birthday in a few days, and the celebration is going to be held here.”

With a light “mm,” he answered, “Grandmother’s physical and mental health as well as energy levels are not very good. None of us have told her about Wenxing yet.” Shi Yi nodded, indicating that she understood what he meant.

“Tong Jiaren will be coming, too.” He thought of something and told her, “Grandmother likes her very much.”

Shi Yi once again nodded.

Prior to coming to Zhenjiang, Zhousheng Chen had informed her that Tong Jiaren and Zhou Wenchuan were already in the midst of filing for divorce.

The two did not have too many entanglements between them, and their divorce was one of mutual consent. Furthermore, Zhou Wenchuan was not insistent on the custody of his child with Tong Jiaren. Whether it was because he was being plagued by the investigations or for Wang Man’s sake, he had very readily agreed that after the baby was born, the child would be under the care of and raised by the mother and had not forced her to leave the baby with the Zhou family.

“Back then, you and her...” She wanted to speak but held back her words, not entirely certain herself what it was she wanted to ask.

Tong Jiaren’s relationship with the Zhou family was very interwoven and complex.

She seemed to have some sort of relationship with each person: with Zhousheng Chen, the engagement between two playmates from childhood innocence; with Zhou Wenchuan, the relationship of husband and wife; and with Zhousheng Ren, a blood relation...

“She and I are just like what I once told you. That simple.”

Shi Yi smiled, “I know.”

She trusted Zhousheng Chen’s character. If there really had been a romantic relationship between them, he would certainly have told her.

In regards to Tong Jiaren breaking off the engagement of her own accord, Shi

Yi more or less could infer the reason why.

After all, since Zhousheng Chen entered university at the age of fourteen, he had all along demonstrated a passion for research. If, in a family, there were two sisters and one liked the uncle who held the control of the entire Zhou family while the other liked Zhousheng Chen, who had nothing but name and empty power, then that family would unquestionably choose to ingratiate itself with the uncle who already had true power and authority.

Zhousheng Chen removed his coat and draped it over his arm. He could sense her gaze on him. "Shi Yi."

"Hmm?"

"All along, I've felt very guilty towards you." Zhousheng Chen was suddenly at a loss for words. "Perhaps you can say, it was not just guilt. I want to tell you some truths."

"Mm. Tell me."

"After you met me, there were many times when you were in danger, to the point where they were even life-threatening." He quietly exhaled a long breath. "My close family members all, to some extent, have done things to hurt you, for example, those several 'accidents' you encountered."

Shi Yi had already guessed this was what he would say.

She remained silent.

Zhousheng Chen possibly was feeling truly guilty then and did not continue to expound on his words, instead asking, "Were you ever scared?"

She nodded slightly.

The time she was most terrified was the gun battle in a foreign country. The smoke of the guns had saturated the air. It was a scene she had never before had to face. As for the remaining incidents, she had been isolated from the truth of the situation. To her, Wuzhen was the place where the most wonderful memories belonging to her and Zhousheng Chen had occurred. And as for that first time, when she had fallen into the water, nobody could have suspected that it had all been a ploy...

Only that last time, the one that had caused Zhousheng Chen to take her and leave the Zhou manor, had she truly been frightened.

He had not been by her side, but she had felt pain so great she thought she was going to die.

.....

“If I had told you everything, you would have realized that, from the very first day you came to the Zhou family, this place was the most vile place in the world. The people here, each harbours his own dark schemes and each has his own secrets...

Falling into a moment of silence, Zhousheng Chen halted his steps and turned to face her.

He was much taller than her, and from her angle, he, naturally, was standing against the light. His eyes and his outline gave her a sense of peacefulness. Even with his back to the sun, he still did not radiate any sense of gloominess.

Shi Yi was waiting for him to continue.

Zhousheng Chen, however, all of a sudden remembered their first, real date.

That day, she had looked him over with an expression of marvel as she circled him with a smile. In a tone of great admiration, she had told him, “Your appearance today is very befitting of your name.”

Zhousheng Chen.

In her heart, this name seemed to be perfection.

He remembered, on that gambling ship ten years ago, after his mother had died, Xiao Ren had laid there in his arms, crying himself to sleep, then awakening only to cry again, saying over and over that he would seek vengeance. Later, Xiao Ren grew up, and he understood the truth behind what had happened, that after his mother’s identity as a spy had been found out by the family clan, it was merely the fear of facing the family’s cruel, merciless methods of punishments that had forced her to choose a brutal method of suicide... Xiao Ren no longer made mention of seeking revenge anymore, and aside from being somewhat withdrawn in personality, he seemed to have long forgotten about his mother’s

incident.

Because Xiao Ren understood one principle:

It was very difficult for those of the Zhou family to have their lives taken by outsiders. The only people who could provide a true threat to them were their closest family.

Zhousheng Chen.

There was no beauty in this name. It merely represented all different forms of danger.

“All along, I have not wanted to clearly tell you about the things in the Zhou family because...”

At the end of the mountain road, leaves suddenly could be seen swirling up.

He halted his words.

Twenty-odd people appeared in their sight and formed two orderly lines as they walked down from the mountain, all the while sweeping away fallen leaves. They all belonged to the Zhou family.

When they saw Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi, they hurriedly paused and greeted them with “Eldest Young Master, Miss Shi Yi.”

Zhousheng Chen motioned to them to continue sweeping. Very shortly, a vehicle turned out from around a bend and drove down toward them before coming to a stop beside them. Poking his head out of the car was Xiao Ren, who had headed up the mountain ahead of them.

“I got there more than an hour ago, and you guys are still here.” Out of the blue, he eyed Shi Yi over from top to bottom and then heaved a long sigh. “Big Sister, you’re wearing high heels. It must have been pretty tiring walking up the mountain, eh?”

The boy’s lips curved upwards. Then, he told them he needed to leave the mountain to attend to some matters and left very quickly.

Only after the vehicle had disappeared from their sight did Zhousheng Chen

lower his head to look at her. “Tired?”

“A little,” she admitted honestly.

Bending slightly at the waist, he hooked one arm under her legs and the other around her body, and scooped her up into his arms.

She glanced around and said to him quietly, “We’re almost there already. Let me walk by myself?”

All around them, the people completely treated the two of them like air, and no one dared take a single sideways glance at them. There was only the rustling sound of sweeping. But this type of stillness, even more so, made her feel a little embarrassed...

He paid no attention to her words and had already begun to walk up the mountain again.

“Zhousheng Chen?” She rested against him and tilted her head up to gaze at him.

“Mm?”

“What you were saying earlier... you hadn’t finished it yet.” She still remembered. “Why did you not want to tell me the truth all this time?”

“You aren’t able to guess?”

“No, I can’t.”

“If I told you a certain hotel frequently had ghost hauntings, would you go stay there?”

“No... I’m scared of ghosts.”

“I’m scared, too.” He paused for a moment before he told her, “I was scared that, if you knew this place had evil ghosts[\[1\]](#) everywhere, you would choose to leave.”

He had said, he was scared.

And what he was scared of was that she would leave.

This was the first time he had ever stated what he feared.

Aside from Wenxing's incident where he had allowed himself to become immersed into the situation, in all the other relationships and matters, the role he took on was more like an onlooker, always maintaining the appropriate clarity of mind, attitudes, and values.

Even in regards to Wenxing's death, in the end, he had still retained and held to his own values.

She believed, that day, what caused him to set down his gun were not the many explanations people had given him but rather, it had come from his own heart. He ultimately was different from the rest of the Zhou family and would not allow himself to pronounce judgment of guilt or to determine any person's life or death.

On this winding mountain road, after taking a little bend, they were already unable to see those people sweeping the leaves.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and raised her head.

Stopping his strides, he looked down at her. "What's wrong?"

"If I kiss you right now, will you still be able to hold me?" she asked gently.

He was a little surprised, but very quickly, his voice also became softer. "No problem."

Adjusting his arms slightly, Zhousheng Chen raised her up a little higher in his arms.

He could sense that she wanted to take the lead, and so he let her bring her face close to his. Shi Yi closed her eyes and, like a cat, she slowly touched her tongue first to the corner of his mouth, then to his lips, and finally, proceeded deeper, beginning to kiss him.

When love had reached the utmost depths, the greatest fear was of losing it.

Fear that the feelings would fade for no apparent reason. Fear of being separated in life. And even more so, fear of parting through death.

She remembered that she, too, had once been terribly afraid. Even when they had become legally recognized as husband and wife, she would still fear that he would suddenly leave her. The promise of a gentleman carried the weight of a thousand gold[2]. From that telephone call in which he had proposed, he had steadfastly upheld his promise.

To accept her, learn about her, understand her, treasure her, and love her.

And for her, she viewed him as her game of chess: regardless of win or loss, life or death, each piece played, each move made would be without regrets.

By the time they arrived at the old manor, it was three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of day when the sunlight was at its best.

To their great surprise, when they stepped into their own courtyard wing, they saw Uncle and Zhousheng Chen's mother sitting inside the sitting hall, and with them were also several of the family elders. Since Shi Yi's engagement to Zhousheng Chen, this was actually her first time directly meeting his uncle, face-to-face.

This man, who currently was at the helm of the Zhou family, had snow-white hair at the temples, but his eyes were energetic and clear.

Zhousheng Chen's mother was still exquisitely dressed. She, too, had just returned from the cemetery back to the Zhou household, still wearing a black cheongsam, and her eyes were listless and dull.

"Miss Shi Yi." Zhousheng Chen's uncle gave a slight nod toward Shi Yi. "Greetings to you."

Politely, Shi Yi also returned his nod and answered, "Hello."

This simple greeting was like a statement of his stance, that he accepted Shi Yi's status and would also relinquish his authority.

All the elders sitting there began to smile, and one after another, they caringly inquired about her well-being, looking at her with affectionate expressions, like the most ordinary of elders. Ultimately, everyone knew that soon, Zhousheng Chen would be the one making the decisions in the Zhou family, and this girl,

who appeared to be kindhearted and harmless, would be taking over all the businesses currently held in the hands of Zhousheng Chen's mother.

In such a family, from their viewpoint, nothing could give greater relief than a peaceful transition.

After all, in these last few months, the Zhousheng surname had experienced much unrest, and everyone had hoped for today's outcome for a long time.

It seemed that Zhousheng Chen did not like for her to have to engage in social civilities with the Zhou family members and motioned for her that she was at liberty to go upstairs.

After Shi Yi had gone upstairs by herself, she sat in the study that she had enjoyed sitting in the first time she had been here and leafed through a book she had borrowed from the library tower the last time she came. The position of the bookmark was still the same, and even the placement of the book was unchanged.

While her fingers flipped through the book, two girls came upstairs, one carrying tea while the other, an incense burner.

The burner, which already contained powdered incense that had been pressed using a seal into the shape of a plum blossom^[3], was placed on the incense burner table before it was lit.

Downstairs, the sound of conversation could faintly be heard but soon disappeared. It would seem that the matters being discussed were not serious. Shi Yi heard Zhousheng Chen's mother say to him, "Xiao Chen, I only have one request: please treat your younger brother with kindness."

Shi Yi did not hear what Zhousheng Chen's response was.

Very shortly, he was walking up the stairs. She was leaning sideways against the couch, listening to the sound of his steady, deliberate footsteps, until slowly, he appeared in her vision. Quietly, she inquired, "Are they all gone now?"

"Yes." He asked her, "Would you like to sleep for a short while?"

“Now?” She thought briefly and then answered, “I’m not too tired.”

The main reason was because the incense he had selected was *qielan* agarwood^[3], which had an energizing effect.

“I don’t think I’ve ever noticed that you like this.” She seemed somewhat lost in her thoughts as she asked him, “Why are you all of a sudden in the mood to burn some today?”

“It was Mei Xing’s suggestion.”

“Mei Xing?” This answer was rather unexpected.

He contemplated over how he could explain to her the answer to her question. “Dogs are very sensitive animals. In other countries, there have been several cases where people had gotten cancer but were unaware of it. However, after their pet dog suddenly seemed to go crazy and bit them, they went to the hospital and the medical check discovered the cancer.” He chuckled, “I saw several times that you’ve been barked at by dogs and made the mental association back to those cases, so I looked through the results from your latest physical check-up. However, I found out that you are physically very healthy.”

Shi Yi could not hold back a giggle. “Oh, my great scientist, you are so very careful. And so? What does this have to do with agarwood incense?”

“And then, I happened to mention this to Meixing, and he used his heretical beliefs to successfully influence me.”

“Heretical beliefs?”

Zhousheng Chen laughed, “He said, perhaps it might be another situation. Dogs can see certain things ordinary people cannot see – for instance, unique spirits – and agarwood can detect supernatural beings and cleanse those things that are unclean, so perhaps it may be good for you.”

Shi Yi gaped rather incredulously at him.

He smiled, “What?”

Qielan agarwood incense.

It took one thousand years to cultivate and was the highest grade of agarwood incense, commonly used by the imperial families of the past.

Vaguely, she remembered that back then, Zhousheng Chen would send all the *qielan* agarwood incense in Xiao Nanchen Prince's manor over to her, but for fear that the incense would be too strong, he only permitted her to use it in her own courtyard and not inside her room.

The doting and love he had once had for her had all been shown in the minute details.

"So, just because dogs bark at me, you two men started a discussion that spanned from modern scientific theories to ancient beliefs of ghosts and spirits." Shi Yi slipped her hands up to rest on Zhousheng Chen's shoulders. "And, you would actually believe in that..."

"Yes." Gazing into her eyes, he answered, "I believe it."

[1] 鬼 "gui." Technically, this word in the simplest sense means ghost or spirit. However, it is often used to describe treacherous or sinister things, usually hidden out of sight. So, of course, here, Zhousheng Chen is referring to the people of the Zhou family.

[2] 君子一诺, 重若千金. A sentence based on the Chinese idiom, 一诺千金 "a promise should be worth the weight of a thousand gold [pieces, ingots]." The concept of the "gentleman" or 君子 "junzi" is someone who would be considered morally upright, and the promises he makes need only be said once, for they would surely be kept.

[3] Incense powder can be formed into a shape or what is called a "trail" by using a metal seal, which acts as a stencil into which the powder is placed. When the seal is removed, the shape remains.



([Image credit](#))

[4] 伽蓝香 “qie lan xiang.” Agarwood (沉香) is reputed to be the most precious and most expensive wood in the world. It has been prized throughout Chinese history, known for its sweet, rich, deep fragrance, and hence, it has been used to make incense (as well as other uses such as medicinally, oils, etc) since ancient times. *Qielan* agarwood is the highest grade of agarwood and is very rare. Historically, it was reserved for the imperial family and worth exorbitant prices, even centuries ago.

Additional Comments:

Based on the comments last post, I thought I'd clarify. Wenxing acted solo on the drowning and poisoning incidents. I believe that the author's intent was that Zhousheng Chen's mother's words in the hospital were not a confession of guilt. They were words spoken out of desperation, hoping to divert Zhousheng Chen's attention away from Zhou Wenchuan so that he would not believe Wenchuan was behind all the attacks on Shi Yi. (I suspect even she thought Wenchuan was the one doing it.) These are her own words, “Do you think, if our family wanted a girl to disappear, we would need to use such gentle means to do so?” and then Zhousheng Chen's thoughts after, “Given that the purpose was clear, if it was Mother, why would she bother to use a method that acted so slowly, like slow-dripping droplets that only gradually permeated to its purpose?” If she wanted Shi Yi to disappear, she wouldn't do it behind his back with all this secret maneuvering. Based on her status in the family, she'd just order someone to remove her from the picture and not be scared to admit it.

The atmosphere of this chapter really speaks to me. After a loved one has been laid to rest, there is still that overarching sense of sorrow of which only time can slowly dull the sting, captured so well by the little details, like the stillness of the mountains of autumn, the solemnity of the two lines of people sweeping the leaves. But, perhaps tying into the underlying theme that the journey of life will always continue, the brilliant sunshine that was described, the confession of and reflection on Zhousheng Chen's past decision gives the feeling they will move on now.

So, here we have it. The reason why he didn't tell her. There were many assumptions tossed around that it was because of his "love for the greater good" that he decided not to tell her, because he was too caught up in trying to get to the leadership role so he would have funds to save the world. But really, it came down to the simplest of reasons: fear. Fear that she would walk out of his life. I have said time and again that I believe the decision to not tell her was a mistake, but truly, his reason is very... human.

I have lots and lots to say about Zhousheng Chen, including more on this point, but I'm going to have to save all of it until near the end of the novel, mainly because I'm really short on time this week and, on top of that, injured so didn't get to cohesively gather all my thoughts on him together. (I'm starting to believe Peanuts, who says I'm a bit of a magnet for injuries, at least this year.)

Instead, I just wanted to mention Shi Yi. The question had once been raised, was it unrealistic that Shi Yi did not know that someone was intentionally trying to endanger her? Disregarding any that may have occurred offscreen that Zhousheng Chen took care of before they happened, these are the 4 instances of danger that Shi Yi was in, that she herself reflected over:

1. Bremen gun fight — This appeared random and out of the blue. She was out of country, nothing had happened before, and it was set-up to appear not even directed at her. Naturally, she would not have thought otherwise at the time.
2. Wuzhen attempted abduction — Zhousheng Chen had been completely prepared for it. Shi Yi heard nothing but the sound of metal falling. Zhousheng Chen had been calm and chatted with her the whole time, reciting poetry. Definitely wouldn't link that to any danger. Even most of us,

as readers, had no clue something was happening just outside her door.

3. Near-drowning incident — This was the first time she suffered any physical harm. Wenxing had been obviously ill. Shi Yi had not been pushed and had fallen over because of the rocking. While we know now that it was staged, the circumstances at the time had appeared like everything was just bad timing. Shi Yi had clued in that Zhousheng Chen was suspicious about the incident, but she had thought it over in her head again, and, most importantly, *given that the person with her was Wenxing, whom she trusted*, she discarded any suspicions of foul play.
4. Poisoning incident — Shi Yi felt fear and probably, that this incident was suspicious but chose not to ask about it. In chapter 15.3, after Zhousheng Chen had slipped the eighteen prayer beads on her wrist, these were her thoughts: “With all these unexpected mishaps and obstacles, she, too, was starting to fear. Fear that a single misstep would result in something terrible happening.” Notice, it was “a single misstep.” She wasn’t thinking fate or random accidents or bad luck. A misstep, a mistake — a moment of letting their guard down, making the wrong move, etc — would cause another incident to happen.

We think of Shi Yi as being very wise, and in many ways, she is. Having endured and remembered reincarnation, her views of life are quite different and mature. She is focused on her values and discards everything that does not feel important to her in the grand cycle of life and death. But, though she has two lifetimes of memories, she’s also quite inexperienced in the world in many ways. As Eleven, she was sheltered. From seven to seventeen years old, Eleven spent all her time in the prince’s manor, never having stepped foot out of it in those ten years. Even to the very end, she only knew that somehow, her family had been involved in Xiao Nanchen Prince’s death, but she did not know the extent of the scheming. In this life, while she may know in her mind that power struggles, scheming, *etc.* can occur, like in the dramas she provides the voice acting for, she grew up in a normal family, stays away from complicated relationships, chose a career where people did not feel the need to maneuver to get to higher places, and in general, stays away from people. Notice how after Mei Xing

informed her about Zhou Wenchuan being investigated by Interpol (chapter 15.3), she immediately linked him up to Bremen, so it shows she's not unintelligent, just has no experience on these matters to draw from. I find it quite reasonable that she would not know until some time after the poisoning, when Zhousheng Chen whisked her away from the manor.

Completed:
1 of 1 Prologue
52 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 17.1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 17.1

[September 19, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [66 Comments](#)



Completely off topic: Yippee! The adaptation of my favourite ancient novel is airing!! Who's joining me to watch *Nirvana in Fire*? (Crossing my fingers that I'm not going to have to go treasure hunting to find a reasonably clear version of it.)

I'm happy to say this chapter is fully back into the progression of their romance. And yes, their romance is still progressing. ♥ Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi are getting some peaceful time for themselves. Oh, and just in case, tissue for you, and you, and you...

Chapter 17.1 – The Moon Shines Upon Home (1)

Little detail by little detail. All the things he did, like droplets, were slowly permeating through her life.

Regardless of past or present life, Zhousheng Chen had never changed. He never voiced his feelings and spoke not about his love, but he was still able to let her know that he cared for and cherished her.

For the next several days, Zhousheng Chen was, as always, busy. The day before Grandmother's birthday, he had a little more leisure time and returned to their courtyard wing. But before he could even change his clothing, Shi Yi seemed to suddenly remember something and asked him, "Are you tired?"

"Not very tired."

"Let's go to the library tower, would that be okay?"

"The library tower?"

"Mm-hmm." Shi Yi stood up from where she had been sitting on the sofa. "Also... could you ask someone to ready some writing brushes and ink? Not the type where I need to grind the ink stick against the stone^[1]. Just a big bucket of prepared ink will do."

Zhousheng Chen was intrigued and soon had instructed people to make the preparations.

They changed and went to the library tower. Nobody normally came to this place, and right now, it was only the two of them there as well. The items Shi Yi had requested had been prepared and placed beside the bookshelves. She walked up, her hand resting on the carved, wooden handrail at the top of the staircase. Peering through the gaps of the three-metre high bookshelves, as if she was mulling over something, she scrutinized the wall on the other side that had calligraphy artwork and traditional Chinese paintings hanging on it.

Zhousheng Chen was in no hurry to disturb her, so he stepped over and from the nearest bookshelf, pulled off a book at random.

As he leafed through the book, he seemed to melt into and become one with the space he was standing in.

Shi Yi's eyes shifted from the wall and the three-metre high shelves onto him. He wore sky-blue colored trousers, a white dress shirt, and a pair of silver, metal-frame glasses, and his suit jacket had been casually draped onto the wooden ladder beside the bookshelf.

It was nearing sundown, and the candles of the lamps in this place had already

been lit far beforehand.

Together, the remaining rays of the setting sun outside the window, the bright candlelight, and him seemed like an ink-and-wash painting^[2] in her eyes. The background was only a faint color, but then as the painting moved to the outline of his figure, it seemed as if brushstrokes changed from being indistinct to vivid... Shi Yi walked over to him and from behind, slipped her arms around his waist, pressing her cheek against his back.

He covered her hands with one of his. “Have you figured out how you will write it yet?”

“Mm.”

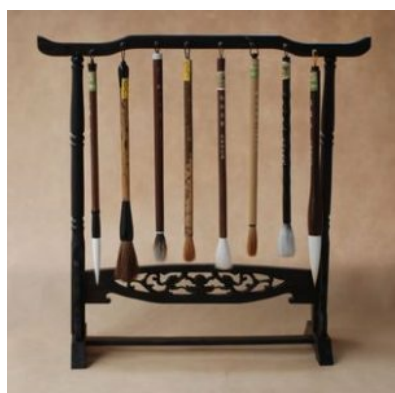
“This library tower is more than a hundred years old already,” he smiled, “but you are the first person to ever think about leaving your writing on the walls.”

“How did you know I wanted to write on the wall?”

He made no comment in return.

Alright, fine. Her intentions were pretty obvious.

This place, indeed, was spotlessly clean. Even when a painting was removed from the wall, there was no noticeable mark of discoloration left behind from the painting having hung there for a long time. From the brush holder that had been prepared for her ahead of time, she selected a brush. Standing on the third step of a wooden ladder, she one word, one line at a time, wrote out the poem, “Rhapsody of the Imperial Park”, that was engrained in her heart. The bucket of ink hung off a corner of the ladder, and now and then, as she adjusted her position, the bucket would also sway lightly.



Brush holder
([image credit](#))

She was focused in her writing, and Zhousheng Chen quietly kept her company.

The words flowed off her brush and down the wall until they happened to stop at that line.

“You’ve forgotten?” Zhousheng Chen had an amused expression as he asked her in a warm voice.

Pursing her lips, she turned her head to look back at him.

He gave a chuckle. “The last half of that line is, *‘Beauty is offered, a soul is given in return, and the heart rejoices to be at one another’s side.’*”

For a moment, her expression was dazed. Something in her mind seemed to superimpose on the present, causing her heart to become too unsettled to continue her writing. She hopped off the ladder and set the brush on the holder.

“Why aren’t you writing?” Zhousheng Chen was leaning against wall beside the window, looking out into the night on the other side.

Without even their detection, the sky had grown dark already. From here, they had a view of the greater half of the old manor, which was brightly illuminated. There was already an atmosphere of celebration for an elder’s ninetieth birthday. The Zhou family placed great importance on these things, so naturally, preparations had been completed for it very early. Tonight, a gambling hall that would operate through the night had been started up as well as some performances of old Chinese theatrical plays.

A three day, three night celebration. Tomorrow would be the birthday banquet.

Despite the relatively remote location of the library tower, from where they were, they could still faintly hear some of the noise.

While he was still deliberating whether he should send for someone to bring dinner to them there, Shi Yi had already noiselessly blown out all the candlelit lamps and walked over to him. Her hand slid from his waist up to his chest where

it stopped at the second button on his dress shirt.

Her palm felt slightly hot, and her body was burning up a little as she pressed up against him.

Her lips also brushed up against his skin.

She wanted him.

“Shi Yi?”

“Mm.” She gently nipped his collarbone, not forcefully at all, but like a cat or dog lightly licking an itch on its paw.

Zhousheng Chen shut the window, and, encircling his arms around her, he allowed her to rest atop the windowsill. “It’s a little cold here.”

“Mm.” She pulled the hem of his shirt out from his waistband, and then her hands slipped inside his clothes.

It really was cold. Cold were her hands. Hot was his body

His hands were a little cold as well, and worried they would chill Shi Yi upon contact with her skin, he only allowed one of them to cover her bosom through her blouse. Soon, his hand slid up to her chin, and tilting her head up with it, he lowered his face down to hers and began to kiss her.

All around, it was extremely quiet and dark.

The window now closed, she could see only his eyes and the contours of his face.

As she breathed in and out very lightly, she could feel his hand, through the material of her garments, trailing all over and lingering on her body.

At first, she had taken the lead, but afterwards, things slid out of her control. While he undid her garments, Zhousheng Chen also had to divide his attention to listen for any movements inside the library tower. With her clothing half-fallen from her body, he slid his own jacket under her for her to rest on, and then, their bodies were already pressed tightly together in union. Shi Yi bit down on her lip, and with her eyes squeezed shut and her back against the window, she held him tightly to herself.

The tip of his nose brushed across her chin, then her collarbone.

His arms were wrapped around her so that her blouse would not completely slip off.

Their lips came together in kisses and then separated again.

The noise and clamour off in the distance had all been shut out by a single window.

“This floating life is but a dream. How often can life’s pleasures be enjoyed? [3]” His voice was right beside her ear. “Shi Yi, alone, is all that I ask.....”

Her body felt limp and she rested herself against him as they tenderly exchanged kisses.

With one stroke of her pen at a time, she had sealed those old dreams of a past dynasty within papers and beneath her pen.

This life and this place, this time and this moment, as she received his love, the one she loved with all her heart was him, this man right before her.

.....

They straightened their clothing and together, went down the stairs of the tower. Zhousheng Chen draped his badly wrinkled jacket over his forearm, not displaying any abnormal behavior and looking extremely proper, as if they truly had been simply reading upstairs... But the lights had been blown out for such a long time. How could the people downstairs not know what they had been doing? However, like him, they were completely unruffled.

Only Shi Yi’s eyes glimmered as if with moisture and evaded eye contact.

He brought her to that private casino that operated without rest, regardless of day or night. Hanging in the corridor near the entrance were pieces of calligraphy artwork of poetry written in bold and elegant cursive script. Shi Yi recognized many of them were the “sexually suggestive poems and amorous songs” he enjoyed, and she could not hold back a laugh.

Zhousheng Chen, of course, knew the reason for her laughter, and crooking his finger, he flicked her forehead.

The two of them stepped further inside.

The entire space had been partitioned off by several hanging curtains made up of strings of beads, creating separate spaces for gambling table after gambling table. There were sounds of shouting, bets being called out, and countless dice rolling over blue and white porcelain plates.

Behind every beaded curtain were indistinct outlines of people.

On the outside of the curtains, there were only several dozen girls who were there to wait upon the guests, carrying alcohol and incense in their hands and hurrying about everywhere.

Everyone present there were friends and family who had come to offer birthday well wishes, and they had all heard, a little while ago, that this eldest young master would very shortly be taking control of the Zhou family. As a result, those who came over to them and offered their greetings and niceties were all very respectful. Zhousheng Chen merely passed through the people, and Shi Yi followed beside him, observing this scene which she had never before seen.

It was not surprising that Zhou Wenchuan would eye this position so covetously. As the second young master of the Zhou family, he most certainly did not lack wealth, but rather... this sort of display, this sort of status.

Zhousheng Chen only strolled around there briefly, as a formality, and then returned with her back to their own courtyard wing.

She was genuinely tired and stretched herself out the chaise lounge beside the window, languidly watching as he changed his clothing. The side of his body was facing her, and she could vaguely make out traces of two scratch marks on his waist, which had been put there earlier. Shi Yi's cheeks instantly burned red, and she turned to look out the window.

She laid her cheek against the soft fox pelt, and soon, her eyelids started to close together.

Drowsiness rushed over her.

Warmth was felt on her waist, and then his arm encircled her. Bending down to look at her, he asked, "Sleepy?"

“Mm.”

Here, in this moment of closeness and intimacy, she suddenly remembered, though, that the poem on the wall was still incomplete and, coincidentally, had stopped at that same line. Inexplicably, her heart felt somewhat unsettled. Zhousheng Chen could sense this, so she told him the reason. He thought nothing of it, however. “Tomorrow night, I will go there with you again.”

“Okay.....”

“Shi Yi?” He was pondering something carefully. “Would you like to have children?”

“Yes.” If she had his child, she reckoned that everyday, she would be holding the baby and not wanting to put him or her down.

He mused for a moment, then asked, “How many do you want?”

“Huh?” This question... Shi Yi was a little embarrassed.

“Would you like a boy or a girl?” he continued to ask.

“Is that something you can even choose?...”

“You can, if you have any special requests.” Zhousheng Chen chuckled, “For example, would you like twins? Triplets? How do you want the genders to be assigned within the multiples? All of these can be accomplished.”

“Really?”

He let out a laugh but did not answer.

“The greatness of science...” She was not even able to keep her eyes open anymore.

He helped her remove her dress and then covered her with a blanket.

Shi Yi was still lying where she had been before. Through her misty state of drowsiness, she could feel his hand, under the blanket, sliding from her waist, down her thigh, to her calf, and then to her ankle and foot. It felt tickly, but she was unable to evade his actions. At last, he let go of her foot and laid down on his side beside her.

His hand was on her body, slowly caressing and stroking her.

In her sleepy state, he aroused a restlessness within her body once again, and she shifted slightly. "I'm sleepy..."

"Sleep, then."

"..... I can't sleep when you're like this."

In a low voice, he told her, "I'll wait until you're asleep, then I'll..."

A seductive voice...

Unable to outlast his pestering, she let him continue.

Into the middle of the night, rain started to fall.

It came down quite heavy and beat against the window.

Awakened by the noise, she discovered that only a thin blanket covered the two of them, and it was rather cool. She reached behind her and felt his back. It turns out he had merely haphazardly pulled a shirt over so that it was only half-covering his body. She speculated that, before he had fallen asleep, he had been worried she would catch a cold and had wrapped her in most of the blanket. Because he was tired himself, though, he could not be bothered with going back over to the bed and had simply felt around until his hand grabbed a shirt. He then threw it over himself and was done with it.

Most of the time, he truly was not overly particular and was actually very laidback.

The air was so cool on his body. Did he not feel cold at all?

Shi Yi used her hand to gently warm his waist as she softly called him.

Dazedly, he made a sound in answer, and then for a moment, he seemed to force his mind into wakefulness before he asked her huskily, "Woke up from the cold?"

"Mm."

"I saw you had fallen asleep so I didn't want to wake you." His own body completely bare, he lifted her, still wrapped in the blanket, up into his arms and carried her onto the bed. He pulled a quilt over so that it covered both of them before bringing her into his embrace once again. And then, very quickly, he fell

into a deep slumber.

Placing her warm palm on the back of his icy-cold waist, she gently rubbed it.

Slowly, she, too, drifted off to sleep.

[1] The ink used in traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting is actually a solid stick composed of some sort of wood soot and natural glue compressed together. To use, it is ground with some water against an inkstone. In the past, ink did not come readily in liquid form and would required to be freshly grinded each time. The inkstone 砚, acted as a mortar to grind the ink stick and then would also contain the freshly produced liquid ink. The inkstone was highly regarded in a scholar's study and together with ink, the brush, and xuan paper, they were called the 文房四宝 "Four Treasures of a Study"



Ink stick and
inkstone ([image credit](#))

[2]水墨图 “shui mo tu.” Ink-and-wash painting is done with a brush and ink on xuan paper. Because an inkstick is ground with water onto the inkstone, ink of varying consistencies can be prepared, depending on how much water is used. Therefore, shading, contrast between brightness and darkness, texture, coloring, etc can all be accomplished with the ink.

[3] 浮生若梦, 为欢几何. This is a line from Li Bai's poem 春夜宴桃李园序 “A Banquet on a Spring Night in a Peach and Plum Garden.” (My translation of the line is modified from Lin Yutang's translation in his book [The Importance of Living](#).) The concept of a “floating life” in Chinese culture is used to describe a state where things of life are variable and not within your control, where you are

but a speck in the world. This line by the poet, Li Bai is saying that our lives are fleeting, like a dream, and therefore, how brief is the time that we actually have to enjoy pleasures.

Additional Comments:

“With one stroke of her pen at a time, she had sealed those old dreams of a past dynasty within papers and beneath her pen. This life and this place, this time and this moment, as she received his love, the one she loved with all her heart was him, this man right before her.” Shi Yi has finally moved on. Not saying that she was treating Zhousheng Chen of the past and present as two separate people but that, my interpretation, she has finally let go of her regrets of the past, for she can at last truly simply “cook and make tea for [him] and tenderly take care of [him]... keep [him] from weariness, keep [him] from suffering, keep [him] from needing to constantly be on the move, keep [him] from being alone, without anyone to trust and lean upon.”

Zhousheng Chen’s response to the line of poetry he quoted from Li Bai (see footnote [3]): if in his floating life, he has but only a brief time to enjoy things that bring him joy, then all he asks is to have Shi Yi. Basically, “You’re the one who brings me true joy” or “All I want is you.” *thump thump thump goes my heart* I know, technically, it’s not “I love you,” but it’s pretty darn close, just as heartfelt and touching, and a whole lot more poetic. *girly sigh* Hooray for our scientist, who has finally moved to vocal expression of his feelings! (And it’s only been ~3 months after they consummated their marriage. Not too slow, really. The once aloof professor should get some credit. :p)

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

53 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao](#)

[Fei Bao, One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones, Translation, 一生一世美人骨](#)
| [Permalink](#).

Chapter 17.2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 17.2

[September 23, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [71 Comments](#)



As xia0xiao1mei pointed out, can a gathering of the Zhou family really only be just a simple birthday bash?

Chapter 17.2 – The Moon Shines Upon Home (2)

The night of the birthday banquet, Grandmother was brought to the family manor.

The elderly woman enjoyed watching traditional Chinese opera, and the theatre in the manor, which had previously not been used for a long time, had been opened again.

The lights glimmered and danced.

When they arrived, the seats of the theatre were already filled. In the main hall on the first level, the people were seated three to each table, and thirty or forty tables were spread across the floor. From that location, if one were to raise one's head, several beaded curtains could be seen on the second and third levels, but what lay behind each curtain was indistinct and difficult to clearly discern.

Such a scene seemed like it should have been taken from the antiquated Minguo period^[1].

Irrespective of old or young, every person who was present, if he was a man, would without exception be wearing traditional Chinese men's attire, and if she was a woman, would be wearing a cheongsam. On the first floor, the majority of people were those who belonged to a generation or position of lower seniority than Zhousheng Chen, and now, they all, one after another, rose to their feet. Zhousheng Chen would merely smile and nod but did not pause his strides.

To Shi Yi's surprise, she actually spotted Du Feng and two other men sitting in the corner of the main hall.

Zhousheng Chen noticed her abnormal behavior and also glanced in that direction. "They are required to monitor Zhou Wenchuan's movements and not let him out of sight."

Shi Yi hesitated but then still asked, "Du Feng's true identity, did you know about it very early on?"

He nodded. "From when he appeared and met your friend, I had already known."

"Zhou Wenchuan..." She wanted to ask him what he was intending to do about him.

Understanding her unspoken question, he told her concisely, "Prior to any formal charges being laid, I will arrange a place for him to stay, but he cannot leave that place, otherwise no one can guarantee his protection. This, for him and for everyone, is the best outcome."

The two of them had followed the staircase up and were at the second level already.

This particular level was actually mostly people from the older generations. They did halt their steps here, stopping briefly to exchange quiet conversation and greet each of the elders. These elders were all people she had briefly seen on her first arrival at the old manor, but this time was altogether different from the previous time.

The levels below were indeed lively and made the third level appear quiet.

In the openness of that space, besides the girls who were serving tea and water, there were only a handful of people, all of them of the same generation as Zhousheng Chen.

Even for such a grand event, Zhousheng Chen's uncle had not made an appearance.

The Zhou family was quietly handing over all of the family business, and the speed at which the former leader was fading from the people's view was unexpectedly swift.

Shi Yi did not know how, amongst the intricate and complicated relationships, Zhousheng Chen had taken the power and control of the Zhou family from the hands of Uncle, who had held them for so many years... But she surmised that, since he had been born into the world bearing the Zhousheng surname and had made it to thirty years old without experiencing an "accidental death," these were enough to demonstrate that he was qualified to be the successor.

Grandmother had taken her seat behind the beaded curtain well beforehand and was waiting to watch the performance.

Keeping her company beside her was Zhousheng Chen's mother and Tong Jiaren. Amid such a joyous and harmonious atmosphere, one could not tell in the slightest that Tong Jiaren and Zhou Wenchuan did not have anything to do with one another anymore.

Simply from observing this scene, Tong Jiaren appeared to be the most virtuous and thoughtful of grand daughter-in-laws and very much had the elderly woman's affections.

When they arrived, several of the girls who were walking back and forth serving tea all greeted him with “Eldest Young Master.”

Hearing this, the elderly lady naturally turned around to look, and from behind the beaded curtain, she beckoned at Shi Yi. “Ah, Shi Yi, come.”

Zhousheng Chen smiled and indicated for her to go over.

Shi Yi hurriedly slipped past the curtain and crouched down in front of the elderly woman.

“Why don’t you sit here?” Supporting her protruding belly, Tong Jiaren said in a quiet tone, “The air here isn’t very good. I want to go outside for a walk.” As she spoke, she had already stood up with a smile.

Although she did not make mention of it, everyone understood that, after today’s farewells, Tong Jiaren would have no association with the Zhou family anymore.

On the other side of the beaded curtain, Shi Yi could only see that in the end, Tong Jiaren had let a young girl hold her arm to support her, and when she brushed shoulders with Zhou Wenchuan, their eyes did not even so much as intersect...

Each gesture and movement, each frown and smile of these people behind the beaded curtains were like performance after performance of plays that had been rehearsed in advanced. Peaceful, loving, and warm. As if the scheming and plotting against one another, the mindset that one must die in order for the other to live had never existed. As if Wenxing truly was only somewhere abroad undergoing treatment and rest and could not make it back to offer her birthday wishes. As if Tong Jiaren and Zhou Wenchuan still had a harmonious marriage...

The only unusual detail was that there were two men accompanying Zhou Wenchuan, and upon closer scrutiny, one could see that these two, who appeared to be Second Young Master’s attendants, were unmistakably restricting his movements and freedom. Zhou Wenchuan needed to make an appearance so as to not cause Grandmother to perceive anything out of the ordinary. And perhaps, this would be the last time he would show up out of necessity for his presence.

Shi Yi was somewhat lost in thought as she watched Zhousheng Chen take a seat in front of Xiao Ren.

Nonchalantly, he picked up a white Go chess stone between his two fingers. Xiao Ren quietly greeted him, “Big Brother,” and he smiled in return.

“Have a seat, Shi Yi.”

Grandmother gently took her hand into her own, pulling her attention back to where she was.

She shook her head. “No, it’s fine, Grandmother. I’m good like this.” Her half-crouched posture was the perfect position for talking to the elderly woman.

The old woman gave her a little smile. “You and Wenxing are the same. When you talk to this old woman, you always like to crouch down in front of me.” As she spoke, she gently patted her own knee. “When she was small, she even liked to lay on her tummy right here...”

Shi Yi also smiled and answered her with an “mm.”

Downstairs, it had gradually grown quiet. The Chinese opera show had started.

Shi Yi did not really understand what she was hearing^[2], but she did find it to be novel, the instrumental accompaniment to be refreshing and lovely to listen to, and the vocals to be soothing and sweet. Grandmother was enjoying this, and when she heard something she found pleasing, she would give a sentence of praise over how strong the foundation was of the singer’s traditional singing technique.

Shi Yi would answer her, while occasionally allowing her eyes to glance over at Zhousheng Chen through the curtain of beads.

From time to time, he would smile and give pointers to Xiao Ren.

The feeling that was exuded was rather familiar.

It was similar to the affection he had once poured on Wenxing.

The opera concluded with Grandmother’s repeated praises.

Shi Yi gently exhaled a breath and discovered that her legs were a little numb.

“Look at you, always looking out there.” With a smile, Grandmother lowered her voice and said, “Keeping this old woman company through an entire show must have been hard. Go out to get some air now.” As the elderly lady lightly patted her hand, her gaze landed on that string of eighteen prayer beads, and for a moment, she seemed caught up in her own thoughts before she sighed, “In the Zhou family’s line of legitimacy, you are the true, legitimate wife of the eldest son, both in name and in fact... Oh, thank goodness... Thank goodness...”

Grandmother seemed immersed in her own world.

Her words were all ones that Shi Yi could not really understand.

Confused by what she was hearing, she was about to ponder more deeply on them, but Zhousheng Chen’s mother had already placed her hand firmly over hers. “Shi Yi, Grandmother needs to rest now.”

Her tone was detached, even a little cold.

Shi Yi nodded. “Alright.”

She stood back up on her feet, but because her legs were still somewhat numb, she stopped behind the beaded curtain for several seconds.

“Mother.” Zhou Wenchuan had stepped up to the other side of the curtain, and quietly, he requested, “I want to say a few words to Grandmother.”

Zhousheng Chen’s mother seemed not to think too much of this and agreed with an impassive sound of acknowledgement.

This particular space was not large and was used only for watching theatrical performances.

It could hold only four wooden chairs, so when Second Young Master lifted the curtain and entered, the two men following naturally could not go in with him and could only wait immediately outside the curtain, truly staying right by him and not letting him out of sight...

She wanted to avoid Zhou Wenchuan and moved to lift up the curtain.

In that instant, someone grabbed her wrist.

Zhousheng Chen immediately sprang to his feet but then, halted all his movements.

He could see a gleaming knife blade pressed against the middle of Shi Yi's back.

Zhou Wenchuan had been stripped of his gun already. How had he gotten ahold of this knife? He had no time to dwell upon that question.

With a low chuckle, almost as if he was whispering into her ear, Zhou Wenchuan greeted, "Eldest Sister-in-Law."

Shi Yi froze.

Their two bodies were very close.

She could hear the sudden, furious beating of her own heart as well as Zhou Wenchuan's slightly ragged breathing.

Madam Zhou, whose back had been facing them, quickly realized that something was amiss, and when she turned back, she saw the knife. "Xiao Chuan [Little Chuan]..."

However, Zhou Wenchuan was faster than her, and silently, he mouthed to his mother, "I am now your one and only son..."

He was smiling, but Madam Zhou's brows gradually knit together. "You can't..."

"I can," Zhou Wenchuan stated, not offering any further words.

"Xiao Ren, Grandmother is tired," Zhousheng Chen suddenly spoke up, but his words were addressed to Xiao Ren, who was beside him with eyes that had already grown icy and were fixed unmoving upon Zhou Wenchuan. "You stay with Grandmother and go downstairs with her."

He knew that, in doing this, Zhou Wenchuan was making his final, desperate bid.

After he finished saying this, he patted Xiao Ren's shoulder lightly.

Xiao Ren ultimately did restrain himself. In silence, he walked past the beaded curtain, bent over at the waist, and said, "Grandmother, let's go back and get some rest."

“Oh... it’s Xiao Ren,” Grandmother said with a little laugh. “Oh, yes, yes... Rest...”

The elderly woman did, indeed, seem to be weary. She rose slowly from her seat, and falteringly, she allowed Madam Zhou and Xiao Ren to help her up and walk at a leisure pace toward the top of the staircase. There, someone was already waiting for her, and after carefully helping the elderly woman onto his back, that person carried her downstairs.

The entire room was so quiet it was frightening.

There were only the sounds, drifting up from the levels below, of casual chatter amid the music of traditional Chinese instruments.

The elderly woman’s every movement had seemed like a film played in slow motion.

Even up to the moment she left, she had not detected that the people behind her had noiselessly raised their pistols, racked the slide, and aimed them at Zhou Wenchuan.

Zhou Wenchuan was unfazed.

The knife slid upwards from Shi Yi’s back and pressed against her neck. “I’ll trouble you, Eldest Brother, to give your gun to me.”

Grinning, Zhou Wenchuan looked directly at Zhousheng Chen.

After all the needless people had left, without saying a word, Zhousheng Chen pulled out the pistol that had been on him and tossed it through the curtain of beads. The gun landed with a “smack” by Zhou Wenchuan’s feet. With a deft flick of his foot, the gun was kicked up into the air and landed in his previously empty right hand.

Zhou Wenchuan did not delay and once the gun was in hand, he racked it and aimed it directly at Zhousheng Chen.

“What else do you want?” Zhousheng Chen’s eyes were fixed on him, a deep look in them.

Zhou Wenchuan let out a laugh. "I want you dead."

"And then, you will take over the Zhou family?"

Zhousheng Chen spoke slowly.

He waved his hand, indicating that no one should make any movements.

To guarantee that Zhou Wenchuan would not do anything to Shi Yi, he even ensured that all the fatal points on his body were exposed and facing the muzzle of Zhou Wenchuan's gun.

"In this Zhou family, only you and her are outsiders." Zhou Wenchuan's voice was so close, and it carried a derisive tone that caused chills down one's spine. "I am Xiao Ren's brother by blood, Mother's one and only son. Your death means I live."

A shocking and outrageous statement.

All the secrets were no longer secret.

Zhousheng Chen was his father's sole offspring. In recompense to his father, Madam Zhou, as his "birth mother," had raised him for nearly thirty years when his real birth mother died. When he learned of his younger brother and sister's secret parentage, he had remained silent about it.

Unfortunately, human relationships and affections were fickle and could change between warm and cold.

In the Zhou family, what he had felt had always been cold more than warmth.

"Let her go."

"Zhousheng Chen," Zhou Wenchuan interrupted him, "don't try to dodge. If you dodge, she will die. Walk towards me."

Zhou Wenchuan knew that he could shoot now.

But, he did not trust anything. He was afraid his shot might go askew and miss and was even more afraid that, in that split second of life and death, Zhousheng Chen really would choose to evade his bullet.

He needed Zhousheng Chen to come closer.

So close it would be impossible to evade. Then, there would be no chance of

error.

“Just look after your own knife.” Zhousheng Chen stated, “If she dies, you will, without question, be dead as well. If I die, you might still have a chance to live.” Without the slightest hesitation, he walked toward that beaded curtain, which was swaying ever so gently.

“No matter what happens, you are not to shoot,” he commanded everyone.

Closer and closer.

Only ten steps away now, a distance where escaping the bullet would not be possible. A single shot was guaranteed a strike in a fatal point.

Downstairs, loud cheering suddenly erupted as the show on the stage gradually entered its climax.

No one had noticed the show that was playing out on the third level.

All that anyone could see was the outline of Second Young Master’s back standing in front of the low railing.

As Shi Yi listened to Zhousheng Chen’s voice, she tried desperately to make a sound.

Large tears streamed forth, but the knife was shoved tightly against her throat, and she had lost her ability to speak.

“Shi Yi, don’t say anything.”

Zhousheng Chen’s voice was low and carried a calming strength.

But her eyes were covered in a misty haze and she could not hear clearly... She was on the verge of asphyxiation. Explosions of white light flashed before her eyes, and the pressure being applied against the handle of the knife caused her to be completely mute. Only her tears continued to flow relentlessly. She did not know whether he was near yet, whether he was already in the range where he would be unable to escape Zhou Wenchuan’s shot... A feeling of despair began

to spread from the deepest reaches of her heart.

All of a sudden, there was the light click of the trigger being pulled.

In that instant of overwhelming fear, she grabbed fiercely at Zhou Wenchuan's arm and rammed him so that his entire body flew towards the railing.

She wanted him to live.

Even if that meant she died.

Almost immediately following, there were the sounds of another two gunshots.

Completely caught off guard by the sudden force, Zhou Wenchuan lost his balance and plunged together with Shi Yi over the railing.

[\[1\]](#) 民国. The Minguo period in China was from 1912-1949. See footnote [3] in Chapter 5.1.

[\[2\]](#) There are many styles of traditional Chinese opera. While the style is not specified here, Chinese opera may incorporate pronunciations and vocabulary from different dialects. In addition, certain pronunciations of words may be modified to allow them to be more easily vocalized. As a result, even native Chinese speakers do not necessarily understand what is being sung in traditional Chinese opera.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

54 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Chapter 17.3

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Chapter 17.3

[September 26, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [39 Comments](#)



It's the eve of the Mid-Autumn Festival for many of you already. I want to wish all readers and followers of this blog a happy Mid-Autumn Day! Blessings to all of you during this Moon Festival.

Anyone feel the same as me, that Mo Bao Fei Bao's screenwriter background is definitely showing through in the previous chapter and this one? Very cinematic. Anyway, one more chapter after this one...

Chapter 17.3 – The Moon Shines Upon Home (3)

Nobody knew what had actually happened on the third level. They only heard gunshots being fired and saw Second Young Master and Eldest Young Madam plummeting from the upper level of the building, crashing into a table and its chairs. Onstage, offstage, as well as the second level all instantly became still.

Fortunately, Uncle Lin had been standing watch on the main level and immediately rushed forward to check on Shi Yi and Zhou Wenchuan.

“Uncle Lin.” Zhousheng Ren stepped out from the southeast corner of the first level. He was only a teenager, yet the expression on his face was much calmer than any other person. “You head upstairs. Leave the matters down here to me.”

He did not say what had happened upstairs.

Big Brother’s gun had had a silencer on it. He was not certain whether Zhou Wenchuan had fired a shot or not.

But he had veritably heard two distinct gunshots. Besides his own... His gaze fell on Du Feng, whose gun was still gripped in his hand. No one would have expected that, in the crucial moment, it would actually be an outsider who made a move.

The entire Zhou family was thrown into chaos.

Regardless of whether it was because of Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi, who were both undergoing emergency medical treatment, or Zhou Wenchuan, who was already confirmed to be dead, everything had happened too abruptly. The unsleeping lights of the old manor were no longer lit through the entire night for a birthday banquet but rather, for this series of incidents.

No one, including Madam Zhou, Uncle Zhousheng Heng, and even Zhousheng Ren, was allowed near the two people who were being revived.

Finally, in the latter part of the night, Uncle appeared, hurriedly organizing Zhou Wenchuan’s after-death arrangements and instructing his trusted attendants to bring Madam Zhou back to the large manor at the foot of the mountain. Madam Zhou’s eyes were utterly unfocused, and tears ceaselessly flowed from them.

Zhou Wenchuan’s body had been struck by two bullets, so regardless of whether Zhousheng Ren’s shot had been fatal or not, he had still fired the gun.

Inside the car, Zhousheng Ren sat in the front seat.

Zhousheng Heng closed the soundproof glass partition, then heaved a heavy sigh. “Wanniang, I don’t know how I should console you.”

Madam Zhou's eyes were completely red, and slowly, she turned her head to look at him. "My children. My two children... If you had been willing to help Wenchuan, he would not have risked his life in a last attempt..."

"Zhousheng Chen will hand over the Zhou family to Xiao Ren in ten years. That is the best outcome."

"Wenchuan is your son, too." Madam Zhou choked on her sobs, unable to speak. "He's your son, too..."

Zhousheng Heng allowed his eyelids to come together lightly, not looking at Madam Zhou any longer. "Even if everyone knows Wenxing and Wenchuan's true identities, I still cannot acknowledge them. After so many years in the Zhou family, you still do not understand this? Just like, no matter how unwilling Eldest Brother had been, he still married you, to give his firstborn son – the son he loved most – a legitimate mother, for only you were worthy of that position."

That year, Wanniang had married into the Zhou family under rumours of a premarital pregnancy, for the sole reason of giving Zhousheng Chen, this Eldest Young Master who had been born premature and had also lost his birth mother, a legitimate status. He and Wanniang had known each other since they were young, but for the sake of the Zhou family, they had had no choice but to give up their relationship. However, their closeness day in and day out had culminated in their feelings taking control of their actions, and they conceived this brother-sister pair that they never should have had...

Karma.

Without the seeds sown yesterday, how could there be the fruit borne today?

Ten years ago, had he not been the one to root out the traitor of the Zhou family and, hence, personally ordered the hunting and killing of Xiao Ren's mother on the gambling ship, she would not have committed suicide by climbing up onto the high-temperature boiler and ingesting poison.

If, in ten years, the Zhou family was handed over to Xiao Ren, it could be considered a form of recompense.

Who in this life has been without fault? How can one make atonement for all the debts one owes to people?

It was deep in the night when Zhousheng Chen regained consciousness.

The gunshot had not struck a vital spot. It was only his arm. Perhaps, it could be said that it should have hit a vital spot, but the bullet had strayed slightly off course due to Shi Yi's intervention. Beside him, someone was performing a medical check on him.

When Zhousheng Chen attempted to rise from his bed, all the physicians fell into a panic but at a loss over how to persuade him otherwise.

Uncle Lin hurried forward to him, and with his uninjured arm, Zhousheng Chen pushed himself up. "Where is Shi Yi?"

Uncle Lin fell silent for a moment.

"Where is Shi Yi?!" He abruptly grabbed Uncle Lin's arm.

His wound immediately tore, and blood slowly soaked through the gauze.

"Miss Shi Yi... has not awoken all this time."

His fingers dug deep into Uncle Lin. His eyes shut tightly and then, he whipped off the white quilt covering him and got off the bed. Some of the doctors moved to stop him but were held back by a wave of Uncle Lin's arm. He pushed open the door and led Zhousheng Chen to Shi Yi's room. As a precautionary measure against further unfortunate incidents, all the medical personnel had been stationed there, and her room had become like a hospital room.

As Zhousheng Chen approached the door, his steps came to a halt.

The pain in his arm was far eclipsed by the fear and anguish that ate into his heart and penetrated into his bones.

Again and again.

He could not protect her.

His hand, which was resting against the door, propping his body weight, gradually formed into a fist. Warm tears spilled from his eyes.

Uncle Lin and the other people in the hallway dared not make a sound and only watched as he slowly lowered his head and pressed it into his arm. For a long

time, he remained there in that position – separated by the door, leaning close against that door, but fearful of entering.

Suddenly, from within the room, someone spoke:

“Is that her finger moving?...”

Zhousheng Chen abruptly shoved open the door. Inside, the doctors all froze and turned to look at him.

But he had fixed his eyes only upon the person lying on the bed.

The line on the heart monitor was jumping... very regularly. Little by little, it dissolved away the fear that had been spreading through his blood and veins.

She was alive. He had to see with his own eyes before he dared believe that she was still alive.

He remembered every word she had said, those words that had slowly seeped into his heart. Now, the person who had spoken them was sleeping but appeared as if she would awaken at any moment and talk to him.

With him, she seemed as if she needed always to be delicate and careful, for fear that she would lose him...

.....

“Wait for me. I need to have a word with you....”

“I have always been curious what a scientific research institute would be like. Would it be convenient to let me have a look?...”

“Do you believe that you have previous incarnations? I might possibly be able to see your previous life...”

“Your appearance today is very befitting of your name. ‘Zhousheng Chen.’ The feeling it evokes in people should be this...”

“Favourable feelings... means we should get engaged?”

“Your mom... what does she like girls to wear?”

“Want to come in and sit for a while? I want... to steep a cup of herbal

medicine for you that will dispel coldness from your body.”

“I wasn’t sure... if you would be used to eating this or not. It’s pretty good.”

“... why did you want to go into scientific research? Was it really because you didn’t know what you wanted to do and just randomly chose that?”

“Liu Gongquan’s writing is too rigid and strict. Would it be not very suitable for an engagement ceremony invitation?...”

“Then, after putting on the ring... do you need to kiss your fiancée?”

“So long as you allow me to always be with you, I will trust you unconditionally...”

“I’m tired... Hold my hand, okay?”

“Zhousheng Chen... is sleeping on the same bed as your wife really that difficult for you?”

“I’m sorry, I’ve really never come across a gunfight before...”

“So... I’m not an unworthy match for you, right?”

“Aside from worrying that I might encounter problems, was part of the reason for your return because... you missed me?”

“If I end up dying first, then I’ll trouble you to suffer through for a little while. Next life... I’ll make it up to you.”

.....

“You definitely have the wrong idea. Zhousheng Chen, you’ve misunderstood what I meant. What I am thinking is, when you have finished all that you want to do, you only need everyday to go do your research on your planet, Venus. The rest, you can leave to me. I will cook and make tea for you and tenderly take care of you. I will keep you from weariness, keep you from suffering, keep you from needing to constantly be on the move, keep you from being alone, without anyone to trust and lean upon.”

Sunlight filtered through the white curtain and fell in the room.

It created dapples of intermixed light and shadows on Shi Yi.

She did not look as if she was in any pain and merely seemed that her eyes were closed, similar to each time he had woken at four or five in the morning to her laying next to him. Never had she allowed the things of the world to trouble her, and even in her sleep, she was always so peaceful.

And now, quietly and peacefully, she was lying here.

“Eleven, the person who steps up onto that platform in just a moment shall hereafter be your teacher.” Third Brother was holding her up high. She was dressed snugly, completely covered up such that only her eyes were showing, and she shifted slightly in excitement.

That bright, sparkling pair of eyes was fixated upon the view outside the city walls.

From here, they could only see the light of daybreak at the edge of the horizon, slowly invading the darkness and melting it into a pale white color.

Below the city walls, there was no one on that high platform, but several large banners had curled over in the fierce wind so that the words on them were hidden from view.

Her hands were cold, but still, she could only continue clinging to the edge of the city wall because Third Brother would otherwise not be strong enough to hold her up..... If this teacher had not had such a great number of rumours and stories about him, no matter what, she would not have snuck out with Third Brother, bringing along only four servants with them, just to catch a glimpse of this Xiao Nanchen Prince, whom she would be seeing three days later anyways.

Zhousheng Chen.

It sounded refined, respectable, and honorable, like someone well-versed in poetry and literatures.

He should have been a prince who stood tall and upright in a study, his features warm, elegant and sophisticated.

And not...

Outside the city gates, this army of hundreds of thousands, which showed evidence of the weariness of travel, stood erect in silence, and from afar, it appeared to be nothing but dead stillness. Off in the distance, several horses galloped in their direction. The face of the man leading the lot was not distinguishable, and all that could be discerned was that his garb of entire white was truly dazzling to the eyes.

“He is coming now, Eleven.” With a cry of “ouch,” Third Brother chastised, “Hey, little lass, don’t move around.”

As the riders approached the platform, they reined in their horses.

Amid the sound of horses’ whinnies, the leader of the group dismounted his horse with a leap and, step by step, walked up onto that high platform, which was empty of any other persons.

Dawn had broken the long night. The entire army was mobilized. The rising smoke of the beacon fires served as backdrop. Yellow sand filled the sky.

He stood high on the platform. With a wave of his hand, there was a resounding sound as seven hundred thousand soldiers knelt before him and, in unison, shouted out, “My Lord!” That resonating cry that soared up to the heavens pierced through the swirling yellow sands, passed through the morning mist, and penetrated to her eardrums... Someone covered her ears with his hands.

This was the true Zhousheng Chen – the Xiao Nan Chen Prince, with thousands of retainers who had sworn allegiance to his family, and the one who held the control of an army of seven hundred thousand.

Was it truly “beauty is offered, a soul is given in return”? Or a mind bewitched by love?

She, at age six or seven then, did not understand any of that. She was only awed and overcome by the scene before her eyes. Her hands gripped beneath them the city walls of brick, and her heart beat furiously.



Soon, the sky was completely lit by the morning light.

The little, noble young master of the Cui family of Qinghe certainly knew that they could not remain in this place for long. Glancing at the hour of day and determining it was about time, he took Eleven by her little hand and led her down the other side of the city walls. Eleven was diminutive in stature and each of her steps was small as well. Because she did not wish to leave, unsurprisingly, she walked even slower.

“Ah! My little madam.” Third Brother’s voice sounded on the verge of crying as he picked her up into his arms. “Your older brother here is only twelve years old. You are almost seven already, and you still want me to carry you around everywhere...”

She encircled her arms around her elder brother’s neck, nuzzled her cheek into it, and gave a little giggle.

“.....” Third Brother adored this younger sister the most, and simply seeing these actions of hers caused his heart to tingle and soften.

Grumbling no longer, he held her in his arms and walked away from there, taking three steps in place of what would normally be two. Regardless of how one counted, the Cui family of Qinghe only had the one daughter, Eleven, and very early on, her status as the future crown princess had been established. Truly, she was extremely valuable, much more important than him, who was merely a son born of a concubine.

Should Father discover that they had secretly slipped out, it was very possible

that the family's disciplinary measures would be enforced.

Third Brother's strides were hurried. Worried that the wind would chill him, Eleven was constantly reaching her hands out to tug his cloak tighter.

Within the protective circle of the four bodyguards, they came down from the city walls without incident, but before they could take two steps forward, someone shouted at them to halt...

Eleven jumped in fright, blinking her wide eyes at Third Brother.

"Don't be scared. Third Brother is here." Third Brother patted her back.

More than a dozen horses had stopped near them, snorting quietly from their nostrils. Warhorses that had experienced the battlefield did indeed exude a fierceness about them.

Clutching tightly to the front of Third Brother's robe, she tilted her head to look up at the people on the horses. Behind the two of them, that man, with reins held in his hands, was framed against a background of sunlight, and he surveyed them, two still-growing children, rather carefully.

Those dark, luminous eyes bypassed the four guards and in silence, looked straight into her eyes.

Eleven cautiously returned his gaze. Quietness surrounded them... So quiet that all that could be heard was her own heartbeat.

Drunken he lays upon a stretch of white bones, uninhibited and free in song. A jug of wine, a single horse; in this world, how many are true rulers?

Had it not been for me, you should have been an exalted prince, a ruler.

This floating life is but a dream. How often can life's pleasures be enjoyed?

If you had known the outcome would be so, would you have regretted taking me as your disciple?...

Additional Comments:

Summary of the Zhou family relationships. Skip if you have it already sorted out in your head.

- Zhousheng Chen's father was the former, legitimate head of the Zhou family. He had one son: Zhousheng Chen.
- Zhousheng Chen's true birth mother died when he was very young (maybe somehow related to his premature birth?) and Zhousheng Chen's father married the current Madam Zhou.
- Madam Zhou and Zhousheng Heng (Uncle) were sweethearts but, for the Zhou family, had been forced to give up their relationship. Zhou Wenchuan and Wenxing are their children from their affair. It is not certain whether Zhousheng Chen's father knew about this (I suspect he might have), but as recompense for this and possibly a repayment of his kindness for not exposing her if he had known, Madam Zhou raised Zhousheng Chen (as per chapter 17.1)
- Zhousheng Heng (Uncle) married Tong Jiaren's younger sister, and the offspring of this marriage is Zhousheng Ren. Hence, Xiao Ren is half-siblings with Wenxing and Zhou Wenchuan through their father.
- (As an aside, Xiao Ren's aunt, Tong Jiaren was once married to his brother, Zhou Wenchuan. Therefore, Tong Jiaren's baby would, by blood, be both nephew and cousin to Xiao Ren. Ugh!! Such creepy relationships.)

It is not clear why it was necessary for her to marry Zhousheng Chen's father in order to give Zhousheng Chen "legitimacy." Could be his true birth mother was not married at all to Zhousheng Chen's father, could be she was just a concubine, according to the Zhou family.... Not certain. It's pretty certain that Madam Zhou is not sore about her husband loving another woman because she, too, loved another man, and she raised his son because of guilt of her affair. Her coldness towards Zhousheng Chen is simply because he's not her son.

Completed:

55 of 56 Main story segments
0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Final Chapter

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — FINAL Chapter

[September 30, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [111 Comments](#)

[tumblr_n8tom7Bh1o1qfxxzto1_500](#)

A short chapter to conclude the main story. Three epilogues will follow. (P.S. For those who read this chapter in Chinese and were a little confused, I believe none of the free, online versions of this chapter are correct. Not sure if it was copied from the original online version incorrectly and the error just perpetuated through, or if the confusion was something that was fixed when the book went to publishing.)

The setting, the surroundings, even the weather are as before. But has the passage of time determined that the persons will not be the same?...

Final Chapter – This Floating Life is but a Dream. How Often Can Life's Pleasures be Enjoyed?

The rain came down in a continuous drizzle, causing Xi'an to seem like misty Jiangnan.

This was Shaanxi province, the vast land of the Three Qins, yet the ancient Chang'an city could not even be seen.

In a Mi Family Paomo restaurant, a very small eatery, it was crowded shoulder to shoulder with people. Its setting was very noisy, but business was exceptionally good.

A man sat in the corner. There was a strong scholarly sense emitted from his face, but his appearance and facial features were very ordinary. One could not say he was ugly, but rather, it was an appearance that one would look at, then immediately forget. He was wearing one of those white coats that were used specifically in a laboratory setting, but the buttons were not done up such that the coat was wide open, exposing the light, checkered button-up shirt and trousers that were underneath.

Very neat and clean in appearance. There was nothing whatsoever that was inappropriate or wrong, just that he did not fit in at all with the current surroundings.

From time to time, someone would maneuver past him, and there would even be people holding bowls in their hands, waiting for a seat to open up.

The business in this place had always been very good, absurdly good, in fact.

When the owner brought over the *paomo*, the man took it from him, picked up a pair of disposable chopsticks, pulled them apart, and rubbed one chopstick against the other to remove any wood splinters that might be protruding. He lowered his head and quietly began eating his lunch.

He had very good eating habits. From the moment he picked up his chopsticks, he had not spoken.

Of course, he was the lone person sitting at this table. The seats beside him were empty, and there was no one to converse casually with him.

Nearby, there were several young people discussing the economy of the Yangtze River Delta region. Following this extremely long period of economic downturn, a significant group of overseas Chinese people had suddenly injected funds into the region, and from the looks of it, it would be a longterm investment.

The subject of conversation of this group of young people gradually shifted over to discuss the backgrounds of those corporations as well as those enticing future job opportunities.

He listened casually. These were things Mei Xing was most adept in, and by entrusting him to handle those operations, he himself did not need to extend any effort at all.

“Teacher Zhousheng.”

Someone jogged in from the restaurant entrance, closed his umbrella, and headed over towards where he was. It was He Shan. “I’ll be responsible for charging your phone everyday, how about that? My only request is that you keep it on twenty-four hours a day for me.” It appeared as if he had been running hurriedly the whole way as the bottoms of his jeans were drenched. “I ran around to several different places. If I hadn’t seen the research institute’s vehicle, I don’t even know how long I would have had to continue looking.”

He Shan had not finished speaking when the mobile phone inside Zhousheng Chen’s pocket started ringing.

He Shan hastily cut himself off. He knew this was Zhousheng Chen’s own personal mobile phone, and the only time it would ring was if there was something to do with *Shiniang*[\[1\]](#) [teacher-mother].

Zhousheng Chen was listening to what was being said on the other end of the phone when all of a sudden, he rose to his feet.

With large strides, he walked out the door, completely overlooking He Shan, who was still standing beside his table.

It was only after Zhousheng Chen had stepped into the research institute’s vehicle did He Shan finally turn around to stare, dumbstruck, after the car that had left so abruptly.

Outside the window, there was wind and rain.

He sat there at her bedside. Just as she had throughout these two months, she still laid there. Sleeping. Living within the world of her own dreams. Had it not been for the telephone call this afternoon, he would not have even believed that she had awoken once for a handful of seconds. Perhaps, because she had not seen him then, she had fallen back into a slumbering state again. He was not hurried. He would wait for her until she awoke.

His eyes were like crystal waters.

Quietly, he watched her.

After a long time had passed, Shi Yi's eyelashes gave a small flutter, and, as if sensing his presence, her fingers also moved ever so slightly.

"Shi Yi?" He held her hand in his and bent down over her.

She heard his voice and tried very hard to open her eyes. However, her eyelids were simply too heavy, and despite her efforts, she was unable to do so.

"Don't be anxious. Take your time."

Within that endless darkness, she finally could see a sliver of light.

Worried that she would be uncomfortable when she wakened, he had adjusted the lighting of the room so that it was very dim, so dim that initially, she could only make out the outline of his face. Gradually, after her eyes grew accustomed, she was able to see his features. She wanted to tell him, she had woken out of her dreams because she had wanted to see him. Her dreams this time had seemed like a reincarnation of her previous life. So wonderful. But she... wanted to see him.

She had been worried he was waiting, waiting for so long he would grow impatient.

Shi Yi wanted to speak, but the long coma had made it difficult now for her to produce speech, and she could only ever so slightly move her lips.

"This is Xi'an." His voice was somewhat lowered and was steady and gentle. "From now on, we will be living here."

Xi'an? Chang'an...

Within her eyes, there were roiling emotions that were difficult to conceal.

Smiling, he told her, "Riding a horse through the city would be very difficult, but I can still take you around here to see everything."

For a moment, she froze. And then, the view before her eyes grew misty.

Taking her hand, he guided it to touch his face.

Her fingers slid from his brows and eyes down the length of his nose.

Over each inch, she moved very slowly.

Those subtle rises and drops of the bridge of his nose and his browbone had not changed in the slightest.

.....

"I have finished writing out 'Rhapsody of the Imperial Park.' Not a single word was missed," he told her softly.

She smiled, tears falling from her eyes.

" 'Beautiful bones. Those with bone do not have skin. Those with skin do not have bone. Yet, most people's eyes are shallow, seeing only the skin-deep appearance and not the bones.' " His voice was clear, like water, as he reiterated the words she had written on the title page of her book. "Shi Yi, say my name."

All this time, her eyes had been blurred with tears, unable to see him.

But, bewitched by his voice, she moved her lips to call him. "Zhousheng Chen..."

He made a sound in acknowledgement and told her in a low voice, "I think, I must have used my beautiful bones as an exchange for you to have unrivalled beauty, as an exchange for you to remember me, as an exchange for you to be able to utter my name when your lips moved."

She smiled. Such extravagantly sentimental words were so unlike him.

Laughing also, he stated, "It seems it wasn't too bad a deal."

"Then..." She pretended to frown. "What about next life?..."

He could not help chuckling. "You continue being unrivalled in beauty. That's

something... I don't really need."

Shi Yi smiled gently and gazed at him.

She heard him say:

"I don't remember, but I do believe. Shi Yi, everything you wrote, I believe."

This floating life is but a dream. How often can life's pleasures be enjoyed?

Through the thousand years of desolation, when even that stretch of white bones has become as sand, Shi Yi, alone, is all that I ask.

[1] 师娘 "shi niang." Interchangable with 师母 "shi mu", which He Shan had once called Shi Yi as well (in chapter 8.1, on the phone.) Both mean "teacher-mother," the wife of one's teacher.

Additional Comments:

It's been 6.5 months since I posted the first chapter of this translation, so I know some people's memories of the beginning may be fuzzy. If the scene in this final chapter doesn't strike you as being familiar — in fact, almost déjà vu — I encourage you to go back and read the first chapter, just to get the effect the author intended.

Such an atmosphere that tugs at my heart. I'm misty-eyed.

Almost a year ago, he had been here, in a rainy Xi'an, in the Mi Family Paomo restaurant and had unexpectedly encountered her. That time, she had taken a chance, had taken the initiative, and from that time on, she had slowly become a part of his life until, unbeknownst to him, he discovered he could not be without her.

Their fated affinity.

Almost a year later, in the same city, in the same eatery, even the same weather... Everything is the same, except she is not here... Or is she? Fate is perhaps being kind to him, and what he had been waiting for — the phone call, her awakening, his name being spoken once again from her lips — finally happens.

Hundreds of years ago, he rode with her on horseback throughout Chang'an, but in the end, they chose to dismount, to part, for there was a greater need.

Hundreds of years later, he has returned to that same city, though the name has now changed. Although he may not remember what happened centuries ago, he can take her through the city once again, and this time, he will not part from her. The sacrifices in the past life perhaps touched Heaven, and in exchange, he received another chance to see her, beautiful before him, still loving him as she always had, and... finally able to speak his name aloud.

Time may have passed, but fate, more than once, has brought them full circle back to the same place to give them another chance.

Fate, in the end, was kind to them.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

56 of 56 Main story segments

0 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Epilogue 1

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Epilogue 1

[October 3, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [37 Comments](#)



First off, thank you, everyone, for all your comments and support. They made me teary. (Gosh, this translation has turned on my waterworks.)

Everyone has their own story. *Without the seeds sown yesterday, how could there be the fruit borne today?*

Epilogue 1 – If There Should be a Next Life

It was said, when the late emperor was still alive, it was rare that a prince within the palace could live a long life, for out of every ten princes, seven would not escape the fate of dying before adulthood.

Fortunately, she was a princess.

Fortunately, the elder brother she loved most was the crown prince.

She was the only daughter of her consort-mother. Out of all the imperial consorts and concubines, the empress trusted her mother the most, and hence, when the crown prince was still merely an ordinary prince, he had stayed, along with her, in Consort-Mother's palace. At the time, this elder brother's body had been frail from sickness, and the medicines he consumed were more numerous than the food he partook. Often, while Consort-Mother was coaxing him to take his medicines, she would sprawl at her elder brother's bedside and play with his sleeve. Round and round in circles her finger would move, wrapping his sleeve around it.

With just a gentle tug on his sleeve, Elder Brother would not be able to hold his bowl of medicine steady, and some of the brown concoction would splatter onto the brocade quilt, bringing about Consort-Mother's laughing reproach. Only in such moments would a smile come into her elder brother's eyes, which were so beautiful, as if dabbed with ink.

The late emperor had passed away, and the prince became the crown prince. And since then, she never again saw her elder brother.

Except for that one time. She heard Consort-Mother mention how the crown prince had stood for one full day and night before the palace gates with a bowl of medicine cupped in his hands, not allowed to move and not daring to move. She had been extremely afraid and had secretly slipped out to the palace gates to stare at that figure, dressed in white and holding a medicine bowl, which had the value of a thousand gold pieces.

That night, there had been no moon.

Crown Prince Elder Brother had been seven years old, and she, six years old.

Many years later, when she recalled that night, it would still be clear in her mind, as if it had only been yesterday. From that moment on, she, the Princess Xinghua, had grown up and matured.

Each day, the one thing she most cared about was simply her crown prince

elder brother. Whether the crown prince had been reprimanded by the empress dowager, whether he had received praises from the imperial tutor, whether his each meal had been eaten without any difficulties, whether his sleep had been restful...

Later, she learned of the news that the crown prince had a crown princess.

Someone brought to her a scroll painting of her portrait – an ordinary girl, besides that inconceivable, gentle smile on her face that carried a hint of innocence and a hint of stubbornness. Those were traits she had never had. Since that moment, when she was six years old and had seen the silhouette of Elder Brother standing there, alone, those things had gradually faded from her.

From that point on, she was no longer the only girl Elder Brother knew and was no longer his little sister whom he had once relied upon for support.

Perhaps, the crown prince had already forgotten he had this younger sister.

From when he had assumed the position of crown prince, the sole time she had physically come close to him again was the night Consort-Mother left this world. As her sobs left her light-headed, she seemed to hear someone call out, “Your Imperial Highness, Crown Prince...”

She turned and saw that man, wan in complexion but whose eyes seemed as if they had been dabbed with ink, standing outside her palace’s doors with a cloak of fox fur around his shoulders. He did not speak, only staring wordlessly into the palace hall, the palace where, when they were young, he had once laughed and played with her. As she gazed at him, her mind pulled up many memories from their childhood: when the weather was fine, she would accompany Elder Brother to read beside the lotus pond; when rain fell, she would accompany Elder Brother and they would watch the rain together beside the lotus pond...

Overlapping layers of familiar warmth from the past began to seep into the depths of her heart.

Although the crown prince had not spoken a single word before he turned and left, she knew that, like her, he, too, was filled with grief.

From that moment on, she, the Princess Xinghua, had no loved ones remaining

but for Crown Prince Elder Brother.

The empress dowager viewed the crown prince as a nail in her eye, a thorn in her side, confining him for years within the Eastern Palace. Upon hearing the reports of the alleged illicit relationship between the crown princess and Xiao Nanchen Prince, the empress dowager had even privately revealed to her trusted ministers her intentions: Xiao Nanchen Prince had entered the battlefields since he was a youth, never once to be defeated, and he was not one to be crossed. Should he have tender feelings for the maiden, then she would grant him the maiden, asking only in exchange that the remainder of her own life be lived in peace and security.

Upon hearing this, she was so alarmed her writing brush slipped from her hand. “What did Crown Prince Elder Brother say?”

The expression of the maidservant next to her shifted, and retrieving the writing brush for her, she gently shook her head and answered, “Crown Prince spoke not a word, as if he had not heard.”

As if he had not heard..... As if he had not heard.....

Who did not know that, in these dozen or so years, as merely a puppet crown prince, Elder Brother had always been a mute?

But how could she allow someone to rob from him the treasure of his heart.

She remained awake the entire night, deliberating through countless numbers of ways and plans. Finally, she steeled her heart and decided resolutely that, even if she should give up her own life, she would take the empress dowager’s life so that the crown prince could successfully ascend the throne and take back his rightful title as emperor as well as the woman he loved.

The affairs of the world were unpredictable. The empress dowager died unexpectedly.

The crown prince sealed the imperial city and prevented the announcement of this to the world. Using the empress dowager’s name, the first imperial decree he wrote was to summon the crown princess into the palace to complete their marriage ceremony. And on that same day, he sent out a secret imperial

summons to the Cui family of Qinghe to enter the palace.

That day, she heard that the representatives of the Cui family of Qinghe had knelt outside the Eastern Palace for two full *shichen* [four hours]. It was into the middle of the night when finally, a eunuch came to lead them inside.

What had been spoken? She did not know, but that entire night, she lay sleepless.

The following day, the crown prince summoned her into the Eastern Palace.

The crown prince of the Eastern Palace. Nobody from outside of the imperial palace had ever seen him before. But, when had she, as a princess, ever had this opportunity to see him here either? That day, half a *chi* [approximately 15-16 cm] of snow had accumulated, and though the palace maids had promptly swept away the snow, it had still soddened her shoes. She could hear the pounding of her own heart as, step by step, she walked into the Eastern Palace and deferentially paid the ceremonial respects.

Upon the daybed, great fatigue had long since come over the man, who had spent the entire night in discussion with the representatives of the Cui family of Qinghe. Under the glow of the early morning sunlight, his complexion appeared even more pallid, so pale it was rather frightening.

Someone brought over medicine, and he took it. Through the rising steam of the medicine, his coughing rang out incessantly. “Xing’er.[\[1\]](#)”

The vast Eastern Palace was extremely quiet, and only his voice could be heard.

This was the name he had addressed her by in their childhood days. Xing’er. Each time he spoke that name, his voice would be very gentle and tender. Only he would ever call her in such a way. It had been ten years already since she had last heard that name being spoken.

She walked over and leaned back against the daybed, leaned back beside him.

The crown prince took a small sip of the medicine. He seemed as if he did not want to take it but still forced himself to. One small sip at a time, he slowly consumed it. “I have set a date for you to be wed.”

Something in the deepest reaches of her heart soundlessly shattered. She gave a light “mm.”

Crown Prince Elder Brother slowly told her, she would be wedded off to the distant lands south of the [Yangtze] River[2], that place where it was said the landscape and scenery were extremely beautiful. She listened to him without speaking many words in return. If her marriage off to a faraway place should aid him in securing his rule over his realm, she would certainly happily don her wedding gown and allow herself to be married off.

That day, she stayed in the palace of the crown prince from the early morning hours until sundown, staying close beside him, as if they had returned to the scenes of their childhood.

Light glistened off the snow and shone upon the red plum blossoms. She stayed with him, admiring the snow as well as the plum blossoms.

“Wasted willows, withered lotuses, but plum blossoms as before.” He stared out at the snow, the expression on his face rather indistinguishable. “I should wonder, after you have wed, will you still have the opportunity to gaze upon plum blossoms glowing in the reflection of the sun’s light off the snow?”

Hastily, she was married. Very shortly after, the word reached her ears of Xiao Nanchen Prince’s plot of treason and the punishment of deboning bestowed upon him by the crown prince.

Then, following, came the grievous tidings of the empress dowager’s sudden death and the news that the crown prince had ascended the throne with the regnal name, Emperor Dongling.

That night, her new husband sighed ruefully that with the death of Xiao Nanchen Prince, the land would surely be thrown into great tumult, and it was fortunate that she had married afar. Among the common people, rumours of the romance between the crown princess and Xiao Nanchen Prince had reached even the folk south of the River. Even her husband had once said in jest, the supposed plotted rebellion perhaps was simply a guise, a show created as a

result of an instance of fury by Emperor Dongling for his fair maiden.

She was silent.

Whether it was true or false, the deed had been done and was irreversible.

Emperor Dongling reigned for three years before his abrupt death. He left no offspring. The empire fell into great disorder.

However, because she, the Princess Xinghua, had married far away, she had been far removed from all the fighting for territory.

Historical records stated:

The deep love between siblings was shared between Princess Xinghua and Emperor Dongling. Later, she was wedded away to the lands south of the River.

The emperor reigned for three years before his abrupt death. War and dissension gradually arose in the realm. Overcome with worry for her homeland, the princess succumbed to grief and died the following year.

Crown Prince Elder Brother.

The lands south of the River have a pleasant climate. The only regret is, here, in this place... you truly cannot see any red plum blossoms glowing in the reflection of the sun's light off the snow.

If there should be a next life, still I will be willing to stay by your side, to admire with you the lotus flowers in the summer and the red plum blossoms in the winter.

[1] 幸儿 “Xing’er.” The 幸 is taken from the first character of the name of the princess, 幸华 Xinghua. The “er” added at the end is to express affection.

[2] 江水以南 “jiang shui yi nan.” Literally, this means “south of the River.” The “river” in this case is referring to what is now known as 长江 “Chang Jiang” or Yangtze River. In antiquity, the Yangtze River was simply called 江 or “The River.”

It is the largest river in Asia and makes a significant mark on the landscape of China. The “lands south of the River,” with its beautiful landscape and warm weather, that is being referred to here is Jiangnan (where most of the modern parts of this story are set).

Additional Comments:

If you have not guessed by now, the character 幸 “xing” in 幸华 Princess Xinghua’s name is also found in the name 文幸 Wenxing — the name of the girl who, through the millennia, may have forgotten why but, within the deepest reaches of her soul, still longed to stand by the “plum blossoms as before.”

sniffles

Anyone ever watched the movie, Vantage Point? (If you haven’t, it’s not a huge loss.) I love how the author has used the vantage points of different characters to describe the same historical event. Each time you see it through the eyes of a different character, you get a slightly different picture.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

56 of 56 Main story segments

1 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Epilogue 2

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Epilogue 2

[October 7, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [40 Comments](#)



I had originally written a character discussion about Zhousheng Chen on the backend of this post because there had been several comments on him that I had said I would respond to later when more information was revealed. However, I've removed it because it was just toooooo long and distracting. Sorry. If there was a question or comment you specifically wanted me to address, let me know and I will do that.

I love Xiao Nanchen Prince. ♥

Epilogue 2 – Ordinary Chimney Smoke

“Halt! Those two children over there!”

Eleven jumped in fright, blinking her wide eyes at Third Brother, who was holding her in his arms.

“Don’t be scared. Third Brother is here.” Third Brother patted her back.

More than a dozen horses had stopped near them, snorting quietly from their nostrils. Warhorses that had experienced the battlefield did indeed exude a fierceness about them.

Clutching tightly to the front of Third Brother’s robe, she tilted her head to look up at the people on the horses. Behind the two of them, that man, with reins held in his hands, was framed against a background of sunlight, and he surveyed them, two still-growing children, rather carefully.

Those dark, luminous eyes bypassed the four guards and in silence, looked straight into her eyes.

Eleven cautiously returned his gaze. Quietness surrounded them... So quiet that all that could be heard was her own heartbeat.

Several sharp, ringing sounds echoed out. Their four guards’ swords had been drawn from their scabbards. Four gleaming blades sheltered Third Brother and her within their protective circle. Although they were facing more than a dozen war horses, facing generals whose entire beings emitted an air of ferocity that could not be washed away, and facing even the Xiao Nanchen Prince, the one whom the crown prince still needed to behave carefully and courteously toward, the four of them would still defend the young miss of their household.

Never before had she seen such a situation, and she shrank herself back into Third Brother’s embrace. However, her eyes still could not refrain from flickering over to peek at him.

At last, Zhousheng Chen pulled his gaze away, and the hand holding the whip gave an offhand wave. “There is no need to make things difficult for two children. Let us go.” Upon saying this, he gave a shout at the horse, turned, and galloped away first. Behind him, his generals still had apprehensions but dared not say anything. Each also shouted at his own horse and quickly followed after

Xiao Nanchen Prince, whose outline had long since vanished at the end of the road.

This was her teacher.

As Eleven stared at the dust that had been churned upwards and that white figure, her heartbeat became slower and slower. She knew that in three days, she would go with her father to formally enter into a discipleship, and he would be the man she would be following hereafter...

This unexpected initial meeting had been buried away in her heart for seven years now.

Seven years ago, she had needed the aid of Third Brother's arms before she could lean atop the city walls and see Zhousheng Chen. Seven years later, she could stand in any place to look at the "him" she wished to see.

But, he was always leaving and returning in haste. In these seven years, even during the New Year or other festivals, most of his days would be spent in the borderlands.

And even if he did return, her senior brothers and sisters would often be accompanying him. It seemed, aside from in the library tower, she could only look upon him from afar.

Several days before the eve of the New Year, the Cui Manor sent someone to bring her home, but she stated that she was ill, having been overcome by wind-cold and it was not advisable that she embark on a long journey. She took the liberty of making the decision to remain in the prince's manor. Upon hearing this news, Third Brother was genuinely panicked and brought with him one of the imperial physicians from the imperial palace to perform a pulse diagnosis on her. The old physician's brows creased together for a great amount of time, but he was unable to provide any explanation, causing Third Brother to pace around anxiously.

Her eyes sparkling, she burst into giggles.

“Why are you laughing?” Third Brother was utterly bewildered, and he stretched his hand forward to touch her forehead. “Has the illness really caused your mind to go silly?”

She shook her head and extended her index finger to write something in Third Brother’s palm. However, for a long time, she made no movements.

Third Brother had doted on her ever since she was young. For her, he had willingly given up a life that could have been free and unconstrained, instead choosing to assume an insignificant post in the imperial courts for the sole reason that he could remain in Chang’an and keep watch over her. In this world, if there still might be a person she could speak the truth to, then that person could only be Third Brother.

She hesitated, but in the end, still wrote out the words: *I want to wait for Teacher to return.*

“Wait for Xiao Nanchen Prince?”

She nodded lightly. Looking back, in this half a year, reports of victories would frequently be received but Teacher had never once returned to the prince’s manor. Hence, she had anxiously longed for his return from the early summer to deep into autumn to today, the eve of the New Year.

She surmised, it should be time for his return.

Third Brother fell into a long silence, and with eyes that seemed filled with deep meaning, he stated, “His disciples have all long returned to their own families to celebrate the New Year. If he does not return, that would mean you will be alone at night for the New Year’s vigil.[\[1\]](#)”

After pondering this briefly, she smiled and nodded again wordlessly.

If Teacher was not here, then she would stand vigil in the prince’s manor over the arrival of the New Year on behalf of him. It could be regarded as a moment of tranquility.

In the end, Third Brother ceded and allowed her to fulfill her wish. Filled with happiness in her heart, she saw Third Brother out of the prince’s manor. Snow

had fallen the previous day, and now, the red plum blossoms in the manor were covered in snow. All around, red and white interspersed together. It was extremely lovely. After she saw Third Brother off, she strolled leisurely back to this place. Suddenly, she halted beneath a twig of plum blossoms, crooked her finger, and flicked the tip of the branch.

The twig swayed and quivered, dropping the snow that had been on it and revealing its damp flower petals.

On this same day one year ago, he had also performed the same action.

She smiled, closing her eyes and remembering how he had looked as he stood beneath the red plum blossoms. The Xiao Nanchen Prince, whose heart lay with the country and the people, had stood beneath the plum tree and carried out such a meaningless action. So very whimsical and so very astonishing to others watching. Last year, she had been beside him, and when she saw this, she could not hold back a laugh. He had detected this and turned to look at her.

In those gentle, glistening, deep black eyes, there were only her and red plum blossoms.

“Young Miss? Shall we prepare for dinner to be partaken?” The maidservant beside her interrupted her thoughts.

Eleven pulled her mind back, and as if her thoughts had been seen into, her ears instantly burned red. She shook her head over and over.

Seeing her suddenly so playful, the maidservant had felt that Young Miss’s illness seemed to be somewhat better and she could breathe out in slight relief. When Young Miss shook her head in refusal to have her meal, though, she again felt rather anxious. While Eleven returned to her room to read, she still went to prepare a lavish dinner. Even though it could not be considered a “family reunion dinner[2],” the evening meal for New Year’s Eve should still be more elaborate.

After all, Eleven had a very honoured status and should not be treated poorly.

However, after the meal was prepared, Eleven continued only to hold her scroll

in hand, reading from when the golden sun was set high in the sky until the lamps and candles were burning throughout the room. Only when she had reached a point of extreme hunger did she rise from where she was, select a plate of small refreshments, and then return back to the desk, where she began to lay out a game of chess.

Very late into the night hours, she still did not feel fatigued.

The black and white chess stones before her had managed to blur time. With one hand supporting her chin, she would stare at the game for a long while before setting down each stone.

The entire time, her shadow cast on the window was noiseless, just like its owner. Ever so patient...

“Warm some wine.” A voice suddenly broke the quiet. Her head whipped upwards. Her dark, shining eyes were filled with his silhouette... He came near, lowering his eyes to look at the chessboard.

For a moment, all that could be heard were voices from behind her, one after another paying ceremonial respects.

He seemed to have thought of something else and casually added, “Tonight is the eve of the New Year. Bring out some [Sichuan] peppercorn also. Eleven, you are engaged in a game of chess with yourself?”

She nodded, coming off the daybed to personally pour some tea for him.

The tea was hot. She had instructed very early on that once the tea had become lukewarm, it should immediately be replaced. Because, she knew he would return.

Seeing that Young Miss was finally willing to move from where she was, the maidservant joyfully instructed people to warm up the food again and prepare for dinner. When Eleven saw the table laden with food and Teacher sitting beside her, smiling cheerfully, she suddenly felt her stomach rumble hungrily, and at last, the idea of eating entered her mind.

Zhousheng Chen picked up the warm wine ewer and poured a small sip into a cup for her before turning his hand to fill his own cup. Eleven looked at him in surprise. All these years, this was the first time he had asked her to drink wine.

He appeared to see directly through her uncertainty and explained gently, “On the night before the New Year, one must drink a cup of pepper wine[3] with one’s family before the New Year’s vigil can be considered as begun.”

She finally comprehended, remembering that Du Fu had indeed written a poem that said, *New Year’s vigil at brother’s home; over pepper wine we sing*[4].

However, the Cui family did not observe such a tradition, and here in the prince’s manor... it would seem he had never before done so either. But, she could not remember.

While he spoke, he took a pinch of peppercorns from a coloured *liuli*-glass[5] cup and placed it into her wine cup, then added some into his own as well. At the table, there was only him and her, and hence, the cups they were using were also a pair. Shi Yi gazed at the pair of jade-colored wine cups, blinked her eyes, and smiled.



Sichuan peppercorns, which actually are the outer husk of the fruit of the Chinese prickly ash. Known for the numbing sensation it causes in the mouth when consumed. [Photo credit](#)

Family reunion dinner. A night for New Year’s vigil.

This was her first New Year’s Eve spent with him. A New Year’s Eve with only her and him.

And, this was also her last New Year’s Eve spent together with him.

Three years later, she departed the prince’s manor and returned to the Cui family to learn the proper rituals for her grand marriage ceremony, and he, by imperial decree, had ridden into battle to purge the border areas of threats.

On the return journey home, they encountered a snowstorm.

There, in a place she had never before set foot, she spent a night and stepped into another New Year.

By imperial orders, she was soon to marry and her position would become even more exalted. Along the way, the various government officials had all attended her respectfully and even offered up their entire manors for her lodgings. The person who came to meet her was Third Brother. Mother seemed to know that Third Brother was the only person who could set her heart at ease. In the vast prince's manor, only Xiao Nanchen Prince could cause her to fall into true, heartfelt laughter, and in the great Cui family, only before Third Brother could she abandon herself to weeping.

That night, she asked only for a writing brush, ink, paper, and inkstone as well as an ewer of wine and a plate of [Sichuan] peppercorns.

Even Third Brother was not allowed to enter.

In her ten years in the prince's manor, she was most adept in chess and painting.

She enjoyed holding a brush in hand to paint, but even during the times when she had been alone, she had still never dared to openly paint his countenance, instead, only hiding him amid the painted sceneries of flowers, grass, and landscape. Painting after painting. She had left them all in the prince's manor, hanging on the walls of what had once been her bedchambers. She surmised, she would not be the only person who understood those paintings. The person whom she had concealed within them would undoubtedly understand them also.

Upon his triumphant return, when he saw the entire room of paintings...

She halted the motions of her brush. Tears fell like rain. They stained the paper, the ink, and also the man painted on the paper.

After two cups of wine, she could already feel drunkenness upon herself. She flourished her brush and fluidly began to paint, but it was no longer lotuses, flowers, or grasses. Behind him, she added mountains and flowing streams, common dwellings, and smoke spiraling up gently from kitchen chimneys — stretching continuously back for thousands of miles.

The land he held in his mind and heart.

Not one built upon outstanding military achievements. Not one of mountains of corpses and bones. But one of ordinary people and common dwellings amongst mountain streams and flowing rivers.

The ordinary chimney smoke of mankind. The smoke of battlegrounds.

In his life, he took no wife and had no offspring, choosing instead to place himself amid the hundreds of miles of smoke of battles, solely as an exchange for thousands of miles of unbroken stretches of ordinary chimney smoke.

And she, after having studied painting for ten years, at last, on this night, painted a man.

Those features, the unparalleled manner demonstrated in each gesture, belonged only to him.

The scroll of paper was completed without pause. In the end, the painting took form and became him.

[1]守夜 “shou ye.” Literally, this means “to guard or stand watch over the night.” It is often called 守岁 “to guard or stand watch over the year” and basically means to see in the New Year. This is a Chinese tradition that dates far back into antiquity. The family gathers to enjoy the blessing and happiness of a family in union, and together, they stand watch over the arrival of the New Year. I will refer to this as “New Year’s vigil.”

[2]团圆饭 “tuan yuan fan.” The “family reunion dinner” is the dinner, usually

on Lunar New Year's Eve, in which the family gathers together to celebrate the upcoming New Year. Often, after dinner is done, the family members will sit together and wait for the arrival of the New Year, *i.e.* New Year's vigil.

[3]花椒酒 “hua jiao jiu.” Drinking pepper wine, containing Sichuan peppercorns, was a tradition during Lunar New Year and was drunk during the New Year's vigil to warm the body.

[4]守岁阿戎家, 椒盘已颂花. A line from 杜位宅守岁 “New Year's Vigil at the House of Du Wei”, written by Tang dynasty poet, Du Fu.

[5]琉璃 “liu li.” *Liuli*, sometimes called *liuli* glass or *liuli* crystal is the art of creating ancient Chinese coloured glass, with roots stretching back thousands of years. The art form was considered very sophisticated and would not be found within ancient common households.

Additional Comments:

One of my favourite things about Mo Bao Fei Bao's writing for this novel is the character of ancient Zhousheng Chen, the Xiao Nanchen Prince. Though there actually are not many explicit scenes of him and many of them were found in Shi Yi's memory, his presence seems to be a thread that carries through the entire story. He truly was righteous and selfless. In his entire lifetime, up to his death at age 31, he took no wife and had no offspring. While the romantics in us want to think it was because his heart belonged to Eleven, keep in mind, when Eleven became his disciple at age 7, he was already 21, well within marrying age.

So why did he not marry? Perhaps, he believed, 匈奴未灭, 何以家为, a saying from the historical figure, General Huo Qubing that approximately means, “The enemy invaders have not yet been vanquished [and the common folk are still in suffering], so how could I [as a general fighting for the people] think about building my own family? “Or perhaps, it could simply be, he did not want to burden any woman with the weight of having to worry about and possibly even lose a husband on the battlefield. Regardless of the reason, he truly showed through his actions that he chose to set aside all of his personal goals, feelings,

etc. and make only the good of his country and people his goal and priority. There were comments before by readers that, they weren't sure why, but they did not hold it against Xiao Nanchen Prince that he chose to give up Eleven. May I propose that it was because we saw that he would give Eleven what love he could — in the form of care, in the form of gathering teas for her, in the form of pouring out all he knew into his teachings to her — so that everyone knew that she was special to him, but he never once made her a promise of being able to be with her? I believe he drew a line in the sand and kept their relationship pure not simply because of their teacher-student relationship. He cared not for power, fame, or wealth, so he easily could have ridden away with her on horseback that day and never turned back, finding a place where no one knew them and living the rest of their lives. But he knew that he had to choose the common people because their suffering and need for a defender was greater than the love between two people. And Eleven knew that was his choice as well.

His righteousness and selflessness are traits that our minds have grasped, but because we see him through Eleven and Shi Yi's fragmented memories, we are also exposed to his caring, his strictness as a teacher (e.g. Eleven's punishment for wasting tea), his gentleness... just enough to make him not seem like a figure that is unreachable, to see him as a real person with emotions and feelings, but not enough to pull him off of the pedestal.

Simply brilliant to me.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

56 of 56 Main story segments

2 of 3 Epilogues

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).

Epilogue 3 and Afterword

One Life, One Incarnation: Beautiful Bones (一生一世美人骨) — Epilogue 3 and Author's Afterword **NOVEL COMPLETED**

[October 10, 2015](#) by [hoju](#) [99 Comments](#)



Attention Toupai and *Really, Really Miss You* lovers! I had promised the epilogue of *Really, Really Miss You* after the conclusion of this story, and next scheduled posting, I'll be keeping my word. For the fans of both *Beautiful Bones* and RRMYY, you might be even more pleasantly surprised... just saying.

This is it, the end of the novel! 7 months of translating. Thank you to all my readers, whether you followed from the very beginning, came in halfway through, or have been waiting for me to mark it with “completed” before you start, and special thanks to all of you who dropped by with comments. You guys provided half the motivation behind this translation, and I am grateful. For those of you who have been waiting to binge read (or re-read) this all in one go, please drop a comment and let me know about your reading experience. I found the way I experienced the novel was quite different between reading continuously versus one chapter at a time.

However, don't completely say goodbye to Zhousheng Chen and Shi Yi quite yet. I have a fun *Beautiful Bones* post coming up in one week, on my next Friday night/Saturday morning post.

Quiz time: there should be one line in this epilogue that some of you had read previously but in another novel. (Gee, which novel could that be, considering I've only translated one other novel on this blog?) Which line is it and where exactly did you read it?

Another full circle for our couple, but Zhousheng Chen is changing the meaning of "continue."

Epilogue 3 – Together to the End of Our Days^[1]

It was the third anniversary of Wenxing's death when they at last returned to the old family manor in Zhenjiang once again. As they were heading back from the gravesite, Zhousheng Chen unexpectedly made the suggestion to offer up incense at the temple. She was extremely surprised by this but did not disagree, only holding their youngest child, Zhou Mushi on her lap as she looked at him with a somewhat amused expression. "My scientist, why are you suddenly enlightened?"

He smiled and was about to say something when Zhou Mushi grabbed his finger.

The little one-year-old child opened his mouth and was about to close it around the finger but was stopped by Shi Yi, who took a disinfecting wipe and carefully cleansed each of Zhousheng Chen's fingers before stuffing the index finger into her son's mouth...

This great scientist who studied the planet, Venus had been utterly reduced to being his son's toy...

As she played with her son, the question she had asked earlier slipped from her mind.

Zhousheng Chen watched her and smiled, not continuing what he had been saying either.

The older sisters, that pair of two-year old twins, were a little more energetic than their younger brother. Because they had already learned to walk, they

enjoyed sauntering slowly around the temple grounds. Uncle Lin and two other attendant girls were present to take care of them, so this was not worrisome.

Shi Yi did not really want the children to enter into the great hall of the temple and carefully handed her son over to the wet nurse accompanying them before stepping into the hall alone.

She was a believer of Buddhism, so when she offered up incense, she was always genuinely reverent. With palms and fingers pressed together prayerfully, she knelt on the kneeling cushion, which already had two deep permanent indentations on them, and bowed three times worshipfully to Buddha. When she opened her eyes, she discovered a figure had also knelt down beside her.

It, surprisingly, was Zhousheng Chen.

Incredulously, she watched him as he pressed his palms and fingers together, closed his eyes, and said a prayer to Buddha of which she did know the details of.

All these years, she had never seen him bow in worship of Buddha before... This change was simply too astonishing!

The Buddha was smiling as he looked down from on high at the two of them in that great hall. Shi Yi stared unblinkingly at Zhousheng Chen until he lowered his hands and opened his eyes.

“When did you start believing in Buddhism?”

He smiled, “Three years ago.”

“Three years ago?”

“Yes, three years ago.” He stretched out an arm and helped her back up before saying, “Three years ago, you were unwilling to wake up and remained in your state of slumber.”

“And then?” she anxiously pressed.

“And then I brought you back to Shanghai. When I was tidying the room, I found what you had written.”

“I know that... But what does it have to do with you believing in Buddhism?”

“You would not wake up. I desperately tried everything, and so, I came here,” he told her in a low voice as he looked back upon the memory. “When I came, it was nighttime and there was no one. And then, I stood right here, remembering that we had once discussed our beliefs and religion. I had told you I was an atheist.”

She gave an “mm” in reply. It was almost as if she truly could see him standing opposite the Buddha, here, in this great temple hall, amidst the flickering lamplight.

“That time...” he chuckled, “I stared face-to-face at him for a long time, but in the end, I still gave in. I asked him to let you wake up. If he let you remember everything from the past and allowed you to come to my side, then you were supposed to wake up, to be with me.”

“Mm...”

Since childhood, he had come numerous times to this ancient temple of a thousand years.

He had once told her he was an atheist, always only standing outside the main hall of the temple and simply enjoying the scenery.

Three years ago, when she had awoken and he had told her he believed everything she had written, she had already been unable to believe it. Three years later, to hear him describe how that night, on bended knee, he had knelt before the Buddha and pleaded with him to allow her to rouse from her slumber..... Shi Yi felt a little ache in her heart even now.

It was pain. Only the pain of loss could bring about such a great change in a person.

Gently, she tugged at the end of the sleeve of his button-up shirt. “Your words, they’re making my heart really ache...”

He laughed.

“It’s true,” she softly reaffirmed. “It’s aching tremendously...”

When your love for someone had infused into your very bones, your hope was that, from his thoughts and beliefs to his physical body, this person would not be constrained by anything, that everything he did was according to his own will and desires. She even felt that causing him to change from believing in science to believing in Buddhism was making him suffer an injustice...

“Shi Yi.” He could not hold back a smile.

“Hmm?”

“We have three children,” Zhousheng Chen reminded her. “I think it’s not necessary for you to allocate some of your motherly love to me. It will be fine if you leave it all for them.”

Well, if he was to describe it that way... She burst out in mirth.

They walked out of the great hall.

Shi Yi suddenly remembered something and asked, “Now, when you look at the Buddha, what can you see?”

“You are asking me, has my answer changed from before?”

“Yes. I’m curious.”

Zhousheng Chen turned his head to glance at the Buddha in the temple hall. “Compassion. It is still compassion, but this compassion feels more humanized.”

She chuckled at this. “How come the way you’re describing it is so strange?...”

“Or perhaps, it is not simply a compassion towards mankind.” He turned his head back and slipped his arm around Shi Yi’s shoulders, guiding her so they were both completely enveloped under the glow of the sunlight. “It is also a compassion directed towards me, personally. He has at last... let me off, for once.”

She broke out again in amused laughter.

Since having children, more and more, Zhousheng Chen enjoyed making witty remarks.

She even felt that this man and the one she had met that first time in the airport were two completely different people. Then, though he had been polite

and would also smile, there would be a sense that you should not dare speak to him. But now... Hmm, the ways of the world had finally managed to infect him.

Lunch was in the restaurant at the foot of the mountain. This was the first time the children had ever had a vegetarian meal.

Their two daughters were already able use spoons and would haphazardly feed themselves, but their youngest son still needed to be fed. Shi Yi was holding him, quietly coaxing him to eat, when voices could be heard successively giving respectful greetings of “Youngest Young Master.”

Someone drew aside the curtains and Zhousheng Ren strode in.

Before he had managed to halt his steps and stand still, the two little girls were already incessantly exclaiming, “Little Uncle!”

“Who should I pick up first?” There was a seldom seen smile in Zhousheng Ren’s deep, black eyes. “How about I don’t pick up either of them? That will be a little more fair.”

Shi Yi smiled, “It’s up to you. The more important thing is that you hurry and sit down because, otherwise, the two of them are about to throw down their spoons and climb up out of their chairs.”

This youth, who had not even reached the age of twenty yet, was already quite a bit taller than her, and as he stood there, he carried an imposing air.

However, he was very deferential to this eldest sister-in-law, immediately pulling out a chair and taking a seat. “Alright, I’ve sat now. You two, be good and eat.”

He had just picked up his chopsticks before the two little girls had already tossed their spoons aside. Okay, fine, they really couldn’t be controlled anymore.

Shi Yi was frustratingly helpless in this. Zhousheng Chen was never one to force the children to eat, nor did he get involved in these matters. In the end, their two daughters had beamingly snuggled themselves up to Xiao Ren, and so, he did not eat either. With one in each arm, he sat down over on the couch to play with them. “Big Brother, how about you give me one of your daughters?...

Forget it. Just give me both of them. I guarantee I will bring them up well, especially well.”

Zhousheng Chen merely shook his head, not even bothering to pay any attention to him.

By the time they returned to the old manorhouse, it was afternoon, when the bright sun’s strong rays beat down from high above. Shi Yi was in the room and had changed into comfortable clothing while Zhousheng Chen sat down in the open-plan study on the second floor and began to check his emails. When she stepped out of the room, she heard him talking on the phone.

She was about to walk over to him when she heard their son’s cries from waking up, and so, she had to turn back.

The instant he was in her arms, he immediately smiled.

Shi Yi was unable to put him down, so she cradled him in her arms, walked back out, and sat down beside Zhousheng Chen.

Vaguely, she could hear a familiar voice. It should be Mei Xing. The two were discussing matters she did not understand, so she simply sat with him and entertained their son. While the naughty little boy was merrily frolicking away, Zhousheng Chen had already hung up the phone and was now watching with great interest as she amused their son in play.

“Done talking?” she asked offhandedly.

“Yes, done.”

“That good friend of yours sure works hard and without any complaints.”

“He is earning money for it. It is not as if he is working for me for free.” Zhousheng Chen smiled, stretched out his arm, and patted her lightly on her forehead.

It was a very natural motion, but in the end, he halted his action. The “beautiful maiden, fair like jade” was there beside him. His hand slid down from her forehead, and crooking his index finger slightly, he caressed her cheek with it. A warm finger and a suggestive, yet tender action. Shi Yi had always been

completely defenseless against such things. She surmised that when she was before him, she would forever be like a young girl who had just awakened to the feelings of love.

His every word and deed, every gesture were able to make her heart beat irregularly.

She was breathing gently, her finger still in the grip of her son's hand.

Zhousheng Chen's finger finally slid down and tilted her chin so her head lifted up slightly higher, and gently, he brushed his lips against hers. Shi Yi shifted her head away and protested, "I'm still holding our son..."

But he was persistent and simply asked, "Not going to continue?"

Nowadays, "continuing" was not as innocent as it was several years ago.

It was only just past one o'clock in the afternoon... If they handed their son over to the wet nurse, people would certainly be able to guess what they intended to do.

She was still hesitating over the matter.

Zhousheng Chen had already tilted her chin upward, intending to continue his kisses to dissolve her indecisiveness.

Before his lips could even touch hers, there was a "smack" as a little palm slapped him on his face.

Son was having a fit...

Zhousheng Chen paused in surprise for a moment and then, could not help but laugh.

Sh Yi's peals of laughter rung out incessantly, and with her son in her arms, she stood. "Whoa! You just hit your dad. You're going to be punished again tonight and won't be allowed to sleep with Mommy." Before she had finished speaking, she heard Zhousheng Chen call for the wet nurse to come in and take their son away.

With a smile, the wet nurse carried Zhou Mushi out of the room and cooed quietly at him, telling him not to stir up trouble or bother Daddy and Mommy and so on.

She did not even have the chance to feel embarrassed before his arms encircled her from behind.

“Just now, when I saw you kneeling in the great hall, I suddenly felt that, in my previous life, I was a coward.”

Her build was slender, and when she had knelt there in that great hall, which had been empty of any persons, opposite the ten-metre high statue of the Buddha, she had appeared extremely small. He remembered the words she had written regarding that life in which she had not had the ability of speech — how each time he led troops into battle, she, inside the library tower, had in silence read books, in silence prayed for his safety.

And he truly had simply let her love him for an entire lifetime and had not returned it in any way.

Shi Yi shook her head and corrected him, “You are a great hero, not a coward.”

You and I are neither god nor Buddha. How could we have had a foreknowledge of everything?

This, is already the best ending.

“Zhousheng Chen?”

“Mm?”

“Let me make a painting for you.”

“What would you like to paint?”

“You.” Shi Yi thought for a moment, then suddenly smiled, “I paint people even better than I paint lotus flowers.”

[\[1\]](#) 百年相守 “bai nian xiang shou.” 百年 in the most literal sense means “hundred years,” but is also to describe a person’s entire lifetime. 相守 literally means “to mutually stand guard over each other” and is describing two people who are together, something along the lines of the English saying, “to have and

to hold.”

Author's Afterword

Let me think what else there is I would like to say.

This piece of writing can be considered near and dear to my heart.

In the very beginning of the beginning, I simply wanted to write a story about past lives and present incarnations. This is purely a personal soft spot of mine. I am fond of stories of predestined love that transcends several lifetimes. This theme has been written so many times in ancient novels already but in contrast, is rarely seen in novels with a modern setting, and I am one who likes to write on topics that are different. So one night, I first wrote a side story.

That's right. It truly came first from a side story, that insert story of Xiao Nanchen Prince and Eleven.

It was precisely because I now had a side story that ended imperfectly that I had the motivation to continue writing the story to a gratifying ending.

After you have finished reading this story, you will discover that within it, there is a very important city: Xi'an. As a result, many readers had previously asked me whether I am from Xi'an. No. Honestly, no. Why Xi'an, then? Because the night I started writing this story, I was listening to the song, "Chang'an Unseen." Chang'an: the world's place of "lasting stability, enduring peace" [chang zhi jiu an], the capital city of many dynasties. Now, thousands of years have passed and the city still exists, but Chang'an can no longer be seen. There's a lot of feeling in that, isn't there? smile

不見長安 by 河圖 Chang'an Unseen ➡



露水未凝干



When the curtains are lifted on the story and the setting is in the former city of Chang'an, the story naturally becomes veiled in a sense of being powerless against the relentlessness of change. I very much like this feeling.

And in this story, Shi Yi has always remembered those things of the past, yet Zhousheng Chen has forgotten them. Very easily, this brings up one question: Was it worth it to have clung so tightly, so stubbornly, to the past? Personally, I really do not like the view that "the one who falls in love first is the one who loses." Why keep such a close track on how much has been given and how much received? To me, in loving and being loved, whether you have received back in kind what you have given into the relationship is actually dependent only upon what your mind is stubbornly clinging to – your own mindset – and has nothing to do with anyone else. Frankly, human emotions and desires are simply [an expression of] what each person stubbornly clings to in their own mind. Since Shi Yi has stubbornly clung to her love for Zhousheng Chen, then why must we trouble ourselves over whether she has been reciprocated in kind? In this life, he has appeared and is no longer merely a memory. That already can be



d fulfillment

f, am a screenwriter, so I write very quickly. But for this particular writing, all along, I dared not write too quickly. During the writing I wanted too much to dwell upon each word, each sentence, but at the same time, I did not dare write too slowly, for fear that I would lose that initial momentum and cause the story to feel incohesive.

from when I first started to write the story to when I set it aside for a while. Finally, its ending, I used a year and a half, stumbling, deliberating, and hesitating along the way.

to-warm-up type of story? Yes, but I very much enjoyed writing it. It was an enjoyable process such that, when the entire story came to a conclusion, I was sad for several weeks and couldn't pull myself out of it...

particular afterword was written one month after the conclusion, but I know for sure that this story here has truly come to an end.

Actually, I initially did not want to write an afterword, but the editor threatened and bribed me, telling me to give her either a preface or an afterword. I, therefore, curiously asked her, was it a fad nowadays to write stuff like this in books? She gave me an answer that I did not expect. She said, she herself wanted to read it.

Alright, fine. This one statement touched me... And so then, this short, little segment of me babbling to myself was added.

There is one other person who also is very important. My dearest He Yajuan. She was the first person to discuss with me the publication of this book in simplified Chinese. I remember, at that time, the discussions for the Vietnamese version were already complete. I had not contacted any publishing companies that printed in simplified Chinese because I was still waiting for someone who would patiently read this story and then willingly publish it. And then, she appeared.

Sure enough, sometimes, you first need to wait and be patient before you will encounter someone who can be a true companion.

Also, thank you to all the lovely, gentle readers who have accompanied this pen name over these last two years. Love you all. ^_^

— Mo Bao Fei Bao

June 1, 2013

Additional Comments:

My last one for this novel, I promise.

I love reading about the author's thoughts on her own story. It gives you an understanding on what she was trying to accomplish and the atmosphere she was trying to weave as well as the heart and dedication that went into it.

I, too, have always disagreed with the saying, "the one who falls in love first is the one who loses." My personal view is that love cannot be weighed on a balance scale, a win and a loss cannot be determined. We are like containers for love. In love, we desire to be filled, but we also desire to pour out into the container of the person we love. Some of us are bigger containers, some of us are smaller, but for me, the important question is, are we being filled and are we able to fill the person we love? The only people able to judge that are the people in the relationship. Shi Yi waited for centuries, but in the end, her heart was filled.

And how appropriate for me that I end this novel with the translation of an ancient-style song. Talk about a full circle for me. (If you don't know what I mean, you must read my first translation on this blog, *Really, Really Miss You*, which I've advertised enough already in this post.) This song, 不见长安 "Chang'an Unseen" was composed and sung by He Tu, the original singer of the four songs featured in RRMV's chapter 33 and 34. The music really does evoke the atmosphere of this novel, doesn't it?

不见长安

Chang'an Unseen

Foreword

我一个人走过千万里，从没觉得孤独。

开始觉得孤独，那是到长安之后的事了。

每个人的心里都有一座长安城。

我花了一辈子，才弄清楚自己其实从没到过那里。

Alone, I have walked tens of thousands of miles, never once feeling lonely.

My first experiences of loneliness occurred after I arrived in Chang'an.

In each person's heart, there is a Chang'an city.

I expended all my life before I understood that I had never truly been there.

[0:44] 村头古树下青草叶上 露水未凝干

At the entrance to the village, beneath the ancient tree, upon the green grass and leaves, the dew has not yet dried

晨雾里渡船唱着歌谣 撑过小河湾

Amidst the early morning mist, a folksong is sung from a ferry as it is propelled across the bend of the river

[1:04] 我枕着手臂躺在屋顶 想了一整晚

I rest my head upon my arms as I lay on the rooftop, pondering for an entire night

瓦下厅堂中谁又说起 纸上的长安

From within the hall beneath the roof tiles, someone speaks again of the Chang'an of writings

[1:27] 桥面像结霜鞋底冰凉 踏过青石板

The bridge surface seems as if covered in frost, and the bottoms of my shoes are cold as I step across the bluestone

擦肩的姑娘眉眼弯弯 笑的多恬淡

The young maidens who brush by have curved brows and tranquil, contented smiles

[1:47] 我背着行囊坐上渡船 扶舷回头看

With my baggage upon my back, I step onto and take a seat on the ferry, hand on the side as I turn back for a look

村落轮廓里炊烟渐次 升起又飘散

Smoke from chimneys rise up one by one from the outline of the village before wafting away

[2:09] 我忽然开始疯狂想念 故事里的长安

Suddenly, I begin to madly long for the Chang'an of tales

我日夜兼程跋山涉水 山水路漫漫

I travel day and night, over hills and through rivers, a long route over the land and waters

[2:31] 这一路走来千里万里 看花开过几转

Through this journey of tens of thousands of miles, I have witnessed several cycles of blooming flowers

春夏秋冬风依次抚过 我发端

The winds of the four seasons in succession have caressed the ends of my hairs

[3:19] 我路过小镇夜凉如水 天边月正弯

I pass by a small town where the night is cool as water and a crescent moon hangs at the end of the sky

路过了江南看到书生 睡在杨柳岸

I pass through Jiangnan, where I see scholars sleeping on the river banks of willow trees

[3:39] 我路过长街熙熙攘攘 叫卖都婉转

I past through long, bustling streets, the cries of its peddlers smooth and mellow

路过了洛阳看到小姐 画楼绣牡丹

I pass through the city of Luoyang, where I see a young lady within a tall, exquisite building making an embroidery of a peony

[4:01] 我渐渐开始每晚梦到 故事里的长安

Slowly, I begin every night to dream of the Chang'an of tales

长安城有人歌诗三百 歌尽了悲欢

In Chang'an city, someone sings three hundred poems and songs, singing out all his joys and sorrows

[4:23] 抵达的时候阳光正好 听风吹的暖软

When I arrive, the sunshine is ideal, and I listen to the wind blowing, warm and soft

可我为什么忽然失措 在长安

But why do I suddenly feel unsettled, here in Chang'an

[4:44] 这重重楼阁浩浩殿堂 都不是我想象

These many pavilions and vast halls are not as I had imagined

我心中曾有画卷一幅 画着它模样

My mind had once held a scroll, which, on it, had a painting of the city's appearance

[5:05] 长安城忽然开始下雨 湿了繁华沧桑

Rain suddenly begins to fall in Chang'an, dampening the bustling magnificence and constant change

慌张人潮里我遗忘了 来时的方向

In the flustered tides of people, I have forgotten the direction from which I came

[5:27] 那年转身离去

That year, I had turned and left

水声远了河岸

The sounds of the water had been far from the river bank

[5:37] 村落是否依然

Is the village still as before?

千万里外 我怅然回看

Tens of thousands of miles away from it, I forlornly turned around for a look.

Completed:

1 of 1 Prologue

56 of 56 Main story segments

3 of 3 Epilogues

(If you made it this far in the post, you might as well rejoice with me that after updating this progress tracker 60 times, there is finally nothing left to update!!)

Categories: [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#) | Tags: [C-novel](#), [Mo Bao Fei Bao](#), [One Life One Incarnation Beautiful Bones](#), [Translation](#), [一生一世美人骨](#) | [Permalink](#).